

September 2021

THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS A CHILD'S RIGHTS CRISIS

- **Mary Potter, 1st Vice President, Environment
National Council of Women of Canada**

Environmental hazards for children in Canada

Environmental hazards in Canada are mild compared to many other areas in the world. However, there is increasing probability of floods, heatwaves, drought and forest fires because of climate change.

Canada's transition to a low carbon future

Canada has committed to achieve a net-zero emissions economy by 2050. The Government of Canada introduced the *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act* in Parliament on November 19, 2020. The act formalizes Canada's target to achieve net-zero emissions by the year 2050, and establishes a series of interim emissions reduction targets at 5-year milestones towards that goal.

The Climate Action Tracker rates Canada's climate target, policies and finance as 'Highly Insufficient'. The "Highly insufficient" rating indicates that Canada's climate policies and commitments are not consistent with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature limit. If fully implemented, Canada's current policies are not enough to achieve this target and are only in line with 4°C warming.

Carbon Pollution Pricing

In 2016, the federal government announced a national climate change policy, which included a [Canada-wide carbon pollution pricing system](#). This includes (1) a regulatory charge on fossil fuels and (2) a performance-based system for industries. The increased tax on gasoline is rebated through income taxes. It is also encouraging industries to become more efficient and use cleaner technologies.

Active Transportation Fund

The Government provides funding to build and expand infrastructure such as bike lanes and trails.

The Climate Action and Awareness Fund has three main priorities:

- support youth climate awareness (request for proposals - closed summer 2020) and community-based climate action (request for proposals - closed fall 2020)
- support climate research at Canadian think tanks and in academia (request for proposals - to be determined)

- advance climate science and technology (request for proposals - closed spring 2021)

Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program (MCIP)

The Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is a five-year, \$75 million program that provides funding, training and resources to help Canadian municipalities adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Other Climate Change Funding Programs

- Climate Action and Awareness Fund
- Green Infrastructure Fund
- Clean Technology Programs
- Low Carbon Economy Fund
- Public Transit Infrastructure Fund
- Carbon Pollution Pricing Proceeds Programming
- Environmental Funding

Electric Vehicle Rebate

The program has two tiers: battery-electric, hydrogen fuel cell, and longer-range plug-in hybrid vehicles are eligible for an incentive of \$5,000, while shorter range plug-in hybrid electric vehicles are eligible for an incentive of \$2,500.

Adaptation Strategy

Natural Resources Canada, together with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Public Safety Canada and Infrastructure Canada, is developing a National Adaptation Strategy that will be used to help protect Canadians across the country from extreme weather and emerging climate risk.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Besides being in the curricula for Ministries of Education there are several other organizations that offer environmental education for school children. Some examples of national organizations that offer programs that specifically address climate change are:

Environment and Climate Change Canada – *resources to help educators bring the environment into their elementary or secondary classrooms. This resource includes lesson plans, teacher guides as well as activities and sites for students.*

Environmental Literacy Council – *this group provides teaching modules developed by the Council and a variety of classroom material ranging from links to sites for kids, to*

labs, class notes, and teaching ideas contributed by science teachers, as well as connecting classrooms around the world.

WWF-Canada – The Schools for a Living Planet Program offers over 30 curriculum-linked, downloadable, in-class activities for Grades 3 to 8, plus links to background info, videos, and games.

GreenLearning – provides education programs about energy, climate change and the green economy. Programs include both hands-on and critical thinking activities.

David Suzuki Foundation – has a resource called Connecting with Nature: an educational guide for grades four to six. It has fun activities that get kids outside to explore issues like biodiversity, where our food comes from and how to conserve energy.

EarthCARE – focuses on energy conservation, waste reduction, and water conservation across subject areas and various grades.

Learning for a Sustainable Future/L'Education au service de la Terre – has innovative programs that empower youth and educators to create more sustainable communities.

Earth Day Canada's EcoKids Program – provides curriculum-based environmental education resources for grades K- 8 to lessen their impact on the environment.

There are also provincial and local organizations that have nature programs for children such as Conservation Authorities and nature clubs.

Our Action

Even though the government has many good programs to mitigate climate change, they have failed to follow through on many of them and so we have to keep urging it to meet its climate action goals.

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