

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS PORTFOLIO

#1: A Strong Climate Change Plan

Proposed Measure

As well as specific action and policy items, the government should develop a strong over-all plan to address the long-term climate crisis and show how specific policies and actions will contribute to the plan.

The major characteristics of a strong climate change plan are:

1. A clear acknowledgement of the science of climate change.
2. The establishment of short-, medium- and long-term greenhouse gas reduction goals that reflect the most recent science, in particular, that global CO₂ emissions should not be allowed to rise above 450 ppm, so as to minimize the risk of the global mean temperature rising by more than 2° C above the pre-industrial level. Long-term greenhouse gas reduction goals should be in the order of 90% by 2030, and short- and medium- term goals should reflect this.
3. The allocation of goals, responsibilities and actions among all sectors of society, commensurate with the emissions they cause and their relative ability to reduce emissions.
4. Provision for mandatory compliance with greenhouse gas reduction measures, as in the UK.
5. A primary focus on long-term strategic results rather than on “lowest hanging fruit.”
6. Provision for a just transition to a post-carbon world, protecting the needs of labour and disadvantaged people.
7. The rapid phasing out of inconsistent government policies and incentives, such expansion of the fossil fuel industry, meeting transport demands by highway expansion, and offshore oil and gas exploration.
8. The inclusion of measures to address emissions outside BC that are caused by BC’s actions, such as fossil fuel exports, the transport of imported goods, and non-domestic aviation and marine transport.
9. The attachment of a strong price signal to both carbon and non-carbon greenhouse gas emissions.
10. A participatory process to engage the community as a whole in the development and execution of the plan.

Benefits

A strong climate change plan would:

1. Demonstrate leadership and commitment, supporting and channeling the efforts of British Columbians who are unsure of what to do about climate change.
2. Support the development of a national and international global consensus to take effective action.
3. Give clear economic signals to the business and investment community to re-deploy economic efforts toward sustainable activities, thus minimizing stranded investments and continued commitments to harmful activities.

Execution

The government (cabinet) would create the over-all plan and design the public process. Specific elements – sectoral targets, a price on carbon, addressing external greenhouse gas emissions – will require legislation and regulation. Such changes would require a cycle of planning and consultations, but the commitment to carry this out can be made right away. The phasing out of inconsistent policies and incentives may require some changes to regulations.