



November 28, 2019

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Wilkinson,

We are writing to congratulate you on your important new position as Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to request a meeting to discuss the work ahead to move forward a national just transition strategy.

First, the new federal government must move quickly to help the communities currently being hit with job losses and associated impacts of the coal transition by acting on the ten recommendations of the [federal Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities](#). As we work to help coal workers and their communities through this, Canada will become better prepared to engage Canadians across other sectors facing challenging transitions of their own.

In particular, workers and communities employed directly or indirectly by the oil and gas sector in Canada face a decline in job opportunities and job security as low carbon alternatives to fossil fuels and the automation of work continue to advance. We must begin to plan now for well-managed and inclusive transitions to a low carbon future. This starts by talking with people about what a fair, green future economy looks like, including communities and workers that have been historically disadvantaged, union members, and precarious workers in Canada.

We all support Canada's commitment to do our part to keep global warming to 1.5°C. We recognize this will have profound impacts on the Canadian economy, but inaction is not an option. A majority of Canadians voted for a new government that would increase its ambition on climate action and move forward with diversification and decarbonization of our economy. **However, we cannot address climate change in isolation of other issues facing our economy.** Canadians are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, with nearly half of us living within \$200 of not being able to pay our bills, while the top 20% of income earners hold more than two-thirds of all wealth.

**Any plan to address climate change must also address economic inequality or else climate change will risk becoming be a more deeply divisive issue among Canadians.**

During the election campaign different political parties made commitments to act on climate change and to ensure that those impacted by climate policies are not left behind. **We want to see Canada’s new government follow through on those commitments and enact a Just Transition Act, giving workers access to the training, support, and new opportunities needed to prosper now, and in the future.**

It’s time for Canada to get to work on this.

The first step to implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities is to endorse the Task Force’s principles on what a just transition includes:

1. Respect for workers, unions, communities, and families
2. Worker participation at every stage of transition
3. Transitioning to good jobs
4. Sustainable and healthy communities
5. Planning for the future, grounded in today’s reality
6. Nationally coherent, regionally driven, locally delivered actions
7. Immediate yet durable support

When it comes to drafting a Just Transition Act, we recommend the following:

- The federal government should create a federal authority that has the mandate to ensure our transition to a low-carbon economy is a just transition.
- The authority must have powers across multiple ministries including the Ministries of Labour; Finance; Foreign Affairs; Indigenous Services; Infrastructure and Communities; Northern Affairs; Innovation, Science and Industry; Natural Resources; Public Services and Procurement; and Environment and Climate Change. (Notwithstanding the centrality of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to the work of ensuring a just transition, the authority should not be housed inside this Ministry alone.)
- The authority must be adequately funded both to have the capacity to carry out its operations and more importantly to invest in a just transition in Canadian communities.
- The work of the authority should be informed by experts from organized labour, the environmental field, economic development, social work, among others.
- The authority should become an expert clearinghouse on the workforce implications of the transition to a low-carbon economy and have staff that can travel and visit affected communities.
- It should provide funds for projects that create jobs and opportunities for communities affected by the low-carbon transition based on transparent criteria.

We look forward to working with you and the new government to advance a just transition to an economy that provides good jobs, protects the environment, respects workers, and supports a prosperous Canada for present and future generations. We would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss these important issues, the immediate need to support workers in Canada's coal communities, and building a Canada that leaves no one behind.

Yours Sincerely,

The board of directors of Blue Green Alliance Canada



Mark Rowlinson, President  
United Steelworkers



Joie Warnock, Chairperson  
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Sarah Petrean, Director  
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Katrina Miller, Director  
Broadbent Institute



Binu Jeyakumar, Director  
Pembina Institute



Jamie Kirkpatrick, Program Manager  
Blue Green Canada

cc

The Right Honourable Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau;  
The Honourable Andrew Scheer, Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition;  
Mr Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois;  
Mr Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party;  
Ms Elizabeth May, M.P.  
The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion;  
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance;  
The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs;  
The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services;  
The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities;  
The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry;  
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs;  
The Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister of Labour;  
The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources;  
The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs; and  
The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement.