

Elbows Up For Climate Action

An open letter from Canada's local leaders

Messrs. Blanchet, Carney, Pedneault, Poilievre, Singh, and Ms. May:

We are mayors and councillors from across Canada, where we represent and serve millions of residents of all political backgrounds. Like so many of you, we are already feeling the effects of U.S. trade attacks in our communities through lost jobs, uncertainty for businesses, and increased costs of daily living.

Increasingly, we are also guiding our communities through another kind of crisis: recurring wildfires, floods, storms and deadly climate events. **We believe this is the moment for Canada to fight back, by investing in national projects that will connect and protect our country from the dual threats of tariffs and climate change.**

Leading through a climate emergency changes you. You can't witness elderly neighbours overheating in low-income apartments during a heat wave, and not recognize the critical role of well-insulated, affordable housing. You can't comfort people who have lost everything in floods and fires, and not wonder how we will afford to rebuild. You can't watch your kids and loved ones choke on toxic wildfire smoke without **knowing the time to act boldly on climate change is right now – because later is too late.**

Over the past decade, we've watched wildfires rip through nearly every part of our country. Just like you, we were stunned when Lytton disappeared off the map. Then parts of Halifax went up in flames. Last year, wildfires engulfed the iconic and beloved Jasper. What's next? Who's next?

We can't keep watching our homes, towns and forests burn to a crisp, and pretend the status quo is working or safe. We can't adapt our way out of this problem.

It is time for us to get to work. We are proposing five bold and achievable ideas the next federal government can implement as soon as it is elected, to tariff-proof our economy and create a jobs boom in every community:

- **create a national East-West-North clean electric grid**, delivering affordable energy to urban, rural and Indigenous communities across the country;
- **build a national high-speed rail network**, and extend it with locally-made electric buses to reach every community in this country;
- **build at least two million non-market, energy-efficient homes**, creating more affordable, transit-linked communities;
- **make our homes and buildings warmer in winter, cooler in summer** with retrofits and heat pump installations across the country, that will cut energy bills and pollution;
- **.... and fund a national resilience, response and recovery strategy** so our communities can prepare for the climate disasters we know are coming, respond when they hit, and rebuild afterwards.

These projects would create hundreds of thousands of good local jobs in cities, rural and Indigenous communities, using Canadian steel, aluminum and lumber. They would bolster our economy and make daily life safer and more affordable for all of us. We *can* afford to pay for them now: by redirecting billions of dollars in fossil fuel subsidies, and strengthening the polluter pays principle, for example.

This is the kind of action that this moment calls for. That is why it has been so disappointing to hear voices following Donald Trump's lead and using this crisis to revive long-dead and unpopular pipeline projects. Let's be honest: new pipelines require massive public handouts, trample on Indigenous sovereignty, and mean more climate disasters hitting our cities and towns in years to come.

As local leaders, we know that whatever their political backgrounds, our constituents are worried about the same things: good jobs; a safe and affordable place to live; and confidence that their leaders have a plan for the next crisis we face, whether a climate disaster – or an economic sucker punch from our closest ally.

We are facing a growing climate threat, and an attack on our economic sovereignty. We can and must take them both on at once. This federal election, let's put our elbows up for climate action, and commit to truly national projects to protect and connect our country.

Signed

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