

## A Call for a Green Future in Alberta

Alberta's environment, economy, and society are facing unprecedented challenges due to the growing need to address the global climate crisis. Restructuring Alberta's energy economy, creating jobs, and protecting the rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are all factors that need to influence our collective response to the critical situation we find ourselves in. As we navigate our way to a sustainable and just future, we need to determine how an ambitious approach to transitioning our energy system can be a catalyst for progressive change on a host of other goals, including good jobs, cleaner air, a fairer society, expanded public services, and long-delayed justice for Indigenous Peoples. And what leadership do we need from our government to get there?

Clinging to old models of resource extraction is a dangerous path for Alberta as high-carbon assets increasingly become stranded and unmarketable in a world serious about addressing climate change. Holding on to fossil fuels as the sole foundation of our economy not only creates high liability, but also leaves Alberta playing catch-up to the clean energy revolution that is already well underway. We are at a moment in time when swift, decisive action from the government can support Albertans already pushing for the transition to a diverse economy that includes a sustainable and just energy future.

The Alberta government has stated its general support for reforming environmental policies, reducing carbon emissions, and transforming our electrical supply from coal to renewables. We now need to implement those ideas by taking substantive action to drastically reduce Alberta's booming emissions and giving our economy a much-needed boost.

According to Environment Canada, Alberta's current emissions growth will ensure Canada has no chance of meeting its 2020 emissions goals. As Albertans, we need to do our fair share, in respecting the land and water and in rising to challenges rather than hiding from them. We need meaningful action that will help us meet emissions targets on a timeline set by science, not politics.

The good news is that Alberta's role in tackling the climate crisis can take the form of policies rooted in social and economic justice, creating solutions to multiple crises at the same time. Our opportunity to get off the fossil-fuel rollercoaster is now. With bold policies, we could rebuild a province-wide sense of shared purpose and create profound shared benefits and opportunities. We need our government to lead this historic transition by:

- Adopting scientifically defensible targets in line with international groups and agreements. Those targets must ensure that Alberta's greenhouse gas emissions peak in 2016 and then rapidly decline, which will require that coal powered electricity generation be phased out by 2025 and that oil sands emissions be aggressively reduced.
- Establishing an economy-wide price for carbon now that will gradually increase to reach \$150 per tonne by 2025.
- Directing infrastructure investment to prioritize and uniquely engage with First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and low-income populations.
- Entrenching the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Alberta law, ensuring that Indigenous land rights, honouring the treaties, and full free and prior consent become the hallmarks of our society's relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.
- Ensuring extensive support and training for workers in carbon-intensive industries, ensuring a just transition to work in the clean energy economy. Workers in these industries must not bear the brunt of the transition off fossil fuels. In fact, with the right policies, the thousands being laid off by the oil industry could

be put back to work now in Alberta's renewables renaissance.

- Supporting urban municipalities and rural districts to address transportation needs and climate change mitigation. We must make massive investments in clean public transit to alleviate traffic congestion and make commuting more affordable.
- Implementing a province-wide energy retrofitting strategy and delivery program prioritizing low-income and First Nations and Metis communities.
- Putting Alberta on a path to 100% renewable energy, recognizing that renewable investments will have wide economic, environmental, and health benefits.

Our detailed policy proposals are available at [www.albertaGEN.ca](http://www.albertaGEN.ca). They are based on sound science and proven policies from other jurisdictions and bodies.

As Albertans, we have a historic opportunity to act on climate and to create a more just society in the process. Health care, long-term care, seniors' care, child care, the arts, education, and public media are all low-carbon jobs and activities that strengthen our social fabric, enhance well-being, and increase our climate resilience. Establishing community ownership and democratic control of power generation will also directly benefit all Albertans.

Opportunities such as those above should be the heart of Alberta's new economy. This is a historic moment for the Alberta government to lead a green, just transition that creates jobs and significantly lowers Alberta's emissions. We call for bold action now - the climate crisis demands it, and Albertans deserve it.

Alberta Green Economy Network

The Arusha Centre

Public Interest Alberta

NUEnergy

Greenpeace

Calgary Climate Action Network

Gridworks Energy Group

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The Green Foundation