

JUST TRANSITION BRIEFING NOTE FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

By the Council of Canadians

We need truly just transition legislation

SUMMARY

- We're in a true climate emergency. Our communities are on fire. They are flooding. They are struggling to make ends meet while ultra-wealthy individuals and corporations profit and emissions soar.
- The federal government is expected to table legislation soon to support a just transition away from the fossil fuel economy to address the crisis.
- As an MP it's imperative that you table the Council of Canadians' [just transition petition](#) calling for legislation to meaningfully address the intertwined climate, social, and economic crises.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The federal government is [planning to introduce just transition legislation in early 2023](#), in response to the thousands of people from coast to coast who continue to demand a transformative approach to the climate crisis that is rooted in justice and led by workers and impacted communities.

Dozens of Members of Parliament have brought those voices into the House of Commons by tabling the Council of Canadians' petition for strong just transition legislation. This petition and the demands it contains present MPs with an opportunity to support a strong just transition and amplify the voices of their constituents, both within parliament and in the community.

CONSIDERATIONS

This section includes the just transition legislation demands listed in the Council of Canadians petition and explains why these items are included.

1. *Just transition legislation must reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030 and make significant contributions to emissions reductions in countries in the Global South.*

- These numbers represent Canada’s “fair share” of emissions reductions according to the Climate Action Network’s *Climate Action Tracker*. They underscore the importance of taking climate action now.
- Countries like Canada in the Global North, and the corporations that are based here, have had a disproportionate role in creating the climate crisis, while the Global South is disproportionately feeling the impacts
- As such, Canadian just transition legislation must contribute to global decarbonization. Canada’s economy has already put so much pressure on the global climate that we must support emissions reductions within and beyond our borders.

2. *Just transition legislation must wind down the fossil fuel industry and related infrastructure, end fossil fuel subsidies, and facilitate the transition to a decarbonized economy*

- This means that just transition legislation must include banning all new fossil fuel projects and their associated infrastructure.
- Legislation should also invest in the wind-down and cleanup of fossil fuel infrastructure including extraction, refining, transportation, and export facilities, and ensure the polluters, not the government, pay for this essential cleanup.
- Just transition legislation must also reject false solutions, including new nuclear power like Small Modular Reactors, which are too expensive and too slow to get up and running to be an effective climate solution; Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and

fracking; new megadams, which are a major sources of methane; and carbon capture, utilization, and storage, an unproven technology that emits more than it captures.

3. *Just transition legislation must create new public economic institutions and expand public ownership of services and utilities across the economy to implement the transition*

- This legislation should establish crown corporations to facilitate economic diversification and job-creation investments in affected communities.
- Additionally, legislation should establish a just transition benefit for affected workers, worker training that ensures historically marginalized groups can access jobs in decarbonized sectors, and a just transition transfer to provinces to enable these measures.
- This legislation must reject privatization and public-private partnerships (P3s) and expand public ownership in sectors like manufacturing, telecom, agriculture, transit, electricity, water, and housing, to ensure the transition is rooted in justice and the needs of workers and communities, instead of corporate profits.
- It must also require the [conversion of existing industrial facilities](#) that contribute to high emissions directly or indirectly toward a green industrial strategy, such as manufacturing zero emission public transit vehicles, renewable energy generation, and zero emission construction.

4. *Just transition legislation must drive inclusive workforce development and ensure decent, low-carbon work for all workers*

- Legislation and its implementation must include affected workers and communities at every stage in order to ensure no one is left behind
- For transition legislation to be truly just it must ensure social equity, linking green jobs to gains for populations that have and continue to face marginalization, including women, immigrants, people with disabilities, racialized people, low-income

households, and Indigenous peoples (including recognition of Indigenous peoples as rights holders, not just stakeholders).

- It should also facilitate the training and employment of workers in green jobs in decarbonized sectors, focusing on affected fossil fuel workers and workers from historically marginalized groups.
- This legislation should also ensure there are desirable, alternative jobs that preserve decent wages and benefits, safe working conditions, and collective agreements. Additionally, it should ensure higher wages, fairness, and respect for existing low-paid workers in low-carbon jobs, including equal pay for equal work, raising the minimum wage, fair scheduling, and job security for all.

5. *Just transition legislation must respect Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and ecological knowledge, and ensure justice for migrants, and emphasize support for historically marginalized groups*

- This legislation must be created and implemented with input and leadership from Indigenous peoples. As Indigenous Climate Action has noted, Indigenous peoples have been systemically excluded from decision-making roles in climate policy. Instead of replicating this pattern, this legislation must recognize and affirm Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and stewardship duties.
- Meanwhile, the Indigenous Environmental Network highlights that “Indigenous resistance has stopped or delayed greenhouse gas pollution equivalent to at least one-quarter of annual U.S. and Canadian emissions.” According to a recent [global spatial analysis](#), Indigenous peoples protect 80% of the world’s remaining biodiversity. Because biodiversity is under threat due to the climate crisis, returning the stewardship of traditional territories to Indigenous peoples is a climate solution.
- It should ensure that all communities impacted by the wind-down of fossil fuels are supported throughout the transition.
- It is crucial that just transition legislation ensure support that meets the needs of historically marginalized groups, including migrant justice and disability justice.

6. *Just transition legislation must expand the social safety net through new income supports, decarbonized public housing, and operational funding for affordable and accessible public transit countrywide*

- This legislation should provide financial and social support directly to affected workers, not the CEOs and corporations that employ them.
- It should also create reliable and permanent federal funding sectors that are essential for peoples' daily lives, including country-wide public transit in urban, suburban, rural, and Northern communities as well as decarbonized and public food and housing systems.

7. *The transition should be funded by increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy and be financed through a public national bank*

- Just transition legislation should be paid for through [the implementation of a windfall tax, an annual wealth tax, and the closing of egregious tax loopholes](#), including raising the corporate tax rate, and ending agreements with tax havens.
- Financing for just transition legislation should include taking existing private banks into public ownership and creating public banks, including a postal bank, as proposed by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.
- Legislation could also be funded by ending fossil fuel subsidies and ensuring polluters pay for their impacts, rather than placing the financial burden of clean up on the public.

Conclusion

Your constituents are counting on you to champion strong just transition legislation in order to take concrete action against the climate crisis, and real moves towards equality. Further information is available at canadians.org/justtransition.

Recommendations

Accept the Council of Canadians' petition, table it via the petitions clerk, and speak about this petition in the House of Commons and your earliest opportunity.

Include information about this petition and its demands in your next community newsletter.

Raise the issue of just transition legislation at your next regional caucus meeting and discuss with your colleagues the need to ensure that the forthcoming just transition legislation meaningfully addresses the intertwined climate, social, and economic crises with bold and the transformative measures described in this petition.