



SUBMISSION TO indu@parl.gc.ca

June 19, 2020

Dear Chair and Committee members,

I am writing on behalf of ClimateFast, a citizens' climate action initiative based in Toronto. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada will be spending huge amounts of money through many new policy initiatives. The large scale of this spending means that the choices made by this Parliament will set the direction of the Canadian economy and society for many years ahead and therefore this is a crucial opportunity to make new, better choices – to build back better.

Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on our economy and has taken a terrible toll on our oldest generations, but we will recover. Meanwhile, the climate emergency continues, far more lethal and far from adequately addressed. As members of parliament with your ability to analyze data you can surely see the urgency. This danger has been clear for decades but a terrible global tragedy of the commons – the lack of transitioning off fossil fuels as hastily as possible - has allowed it to become apocalyptic in its threat to the future.

The warnings have become manifest; we break heat records year after year and parts of the globe are becoming unlivable which will result in a billion refugees by 2050; weather has become increasingly unpredictable, costly and dangerous; the poles are very rapidly warming, which amongst other effects, will result in the loss of many arctic species; and few if any of the world's coral reefs will be alive much longer. These spectacular habitats are home to 25% of ocean species. By no moral or economic accounting is this destruction worth temporarily allowing a fossil fuel-based economy to continue.

Canada is currently on track to miss its' Paris commitments by a wide margin.

These commitments are based on limiting global warming to 2 degrees centigrade, which at best gives us a 2 in 3 chance of avoiding catastrophic ecological damage

before the end of the century. To continue down this path is extremely risky and extremely unfair to our children and our children's children. Clearly committing tens of billions to new fossil fuel infrastructure, a system which already has us tied with the U.S. with the highest per capita GHG emissions in the OECD, will only take us further down the wrong path. This is the choice. **It is well within our technical, social and economic means to achieve a carbon-neutral world.** We ask that the committee not let this historic opportunity be missed.

JUST RECOVERY PRINCIPLES

ClimateFast supports the implementation of a program of spending that follows the Principles for a Just Recovery.

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS –

1) MASS DEEP RETROFITS – 50% OF GHG EMISSIONS (approximate)

Canada has 15 million homes, most of which will need a deep energy retrofit to make them more energy efficient and to replace the use of oil or gas with electric heat pumps or biofuel. Reducing energy waste from buildings, by draft-proofing and improved insulation, improves comfort and reduces energy demand – the so-called “negawatt” (i.e. reduction in energy use) is actually the cheapest form of energy.

The funding required for mass deep retrofits at the pace required will be on the order of \$12 – \$16 billion *to allow for the financing of the number of retrofits needed every year to achieve the GHG reductions we are aiming for by 2030.* In Toronto that would be 26,000 buildings per year.

Currently only about 200 buildings are being retrofitted through the City's HELP (Home Energy Loan Program) program. *(These are the figures as we understand them from our communication with TransformTO and HELP programs.)*

Retrofit programs are great job creators because most of cost is labour, local labour. Both skilled labour and relatively unskilled workers who can be quickly trained are needed. It is an excellent program to support to provide benefit to those most in need: youth and marginalized communities. There will be social and economic co-benefits from this investment far beyond what might be possible from other bailout programs, so that this investment fits with the principles for a just economic recovery.

These retrofits can utilize new technologies such as heat pumps and could be done on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis with community energy systems integrated into this work. Going neighbourhood by neighbourhood will allow for bulk savings on both purchases of necessary materials and labour. An estimate for bulk deep retrofits might be \$40,000 per house.

2) GEOTHERMAL AND OTHER RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS

COVID recovery spending programs are an excellent opportunity to develop and promote renewable energy technologies, hydrogen for energy storage and fuel, geothermal and air-source heat pumps, and district energy systems (for example sharing waste heat from some buildings (e.g. skating rinks) with nearby buildings

needing heat (e.g. homes)). Low carbon solutions are available now. All that is needed is the vision, commitment, and confidence to scale it up, roll it out, and reap the many benefits of cleaner air and water, more comfortable homes, and greater local employment.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS WORTH INVESTMENT DURING COVID RECOVERY

- 3) FINANCING FOR TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE
- 4) accelerated implementation of EV CHARGING CAPACITY across the country
- 5) NATIONAL ELECTRIC GRID

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward to hearing your plan as it develops going forward.

Sincerely,

Lyn Adamson
Co-Chair, ClimateFast

REFERENCES:

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