

## Some Notes on the Canadian Zero Emissions Accountability Bill C12

This Bill provides the legislative framework for the Canadian government's actions to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The measures which the Government intends to use to achieve this neutrality must be tabled in Parliament within 6 months of the adoption of Bill C12.

The Bill mandates the Government to set emission reduction targets, with the first target set for 2030 and ever 5 years after that up to 2050. **The main criticism of this target setting is that 2030 is too distant, with too many unknowns, nationally and internationally, between now and then. There is general agreement, outside the Government, that the first target date should be 2025. There is no stated connection between the above mentioned targets and the pricing of carbon emissions . There is no mention in the 2019 Throne speech what the periodic rate of increases in carbon prices will be. Most commentators have considered that they need to increase by a greater percentage than those previously indicated by the Government. Definite, stronger and more urgent measures will indicate how serious the government is in significantly reducing carbon emissions quickly.**

Each five year plan must set emission reduction targets and lay out in some detail, strategies for reaching those targets.

The Minister responsible for enacting each 5 year plan is to be the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change. The Minister must provide a progress report two years before the target date about the success or failure of the enactment of the plan to achieve the designated targets. If there is failure in progress, the Minister must include plans to remediate the failure. The Minister may also submit amendments to the 5 year plan. **It is not clearly stated that these remedial strategies or amendments cannot lower the emissions target for the plan. Amending the plan to lower emission targets must be clearly ruled out. One report within 5 years seems very insufficient. There should at least be two.**

In composing each 5 year plan the Minister will receive recommendations from a Government selected and appointed Advisory Committee. This Committee will advise on what the emission reduction targets should be, the strategies to achieve those targets, and their impacts upon the economy and society in general. The Committee will give to the Minister a yearly report on their activities.

Before each target year is reached a report will be submitted by the Environmental Commissioner on the success or failure of the plan, with recommendations for remediation and other possible strategies to improve emission reductions. These reports must be made public.

**It is unclear why there needs to be two bodies with input into 5 year plans, particularly when neither body has any powers to ensure their recommendations will be acted upon. There is a fundamental weakness in the Canadian plan in that, unlike the United Kingdom or New Zealand legislation, the Canadian plan is politically driven, whereas the UK and NZ plans are scientifically driven. In their plans there is one Climate Committee that makes recommendations for each 5 year plan .The Minister must adopt these recommendations or give convincing reasons why she or he considers the scientific advice is unacceptable. Also in the UK and NZ the Climate Committee gives yearly public evaluations of the progress of the plan. There should be one Climate Committee, led by a Climate Commissioner, selected by a non partisan nominations**

**committee and then appointed by the Government but which reports to Parliament. In this way the Climate Committee is at arms length from the government and is not working according to political interests. This would also have the effect of ensuring the public has confidence in the measures involved in enacting the 5 year plans. The committee must have gender balance and Indigenous peoples inclusion.**

In the making of each 5 year plan the Minister must consult with the Provinces and receive submissions from them about the contents of the plans. Other interested parties must also be consulted, including the general public. **How the Federal Government will gain the cooperation of the Provinces is not spelled out. The success of any plan will depend upon coordination with the Provinces being achieved, either by willing cooperation or unwilling coercion; the former being the more desirable, but the latter necessary, if required. Probably the Federal Government is awaiting the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on the Federal Government's authority to impose climate demands upon the provinces.**

**There is no mention in the Bill about financing the plan, except that the Minister of Finance is required each year to report to Parliament about financial implications for Government Departments and Crown Corporations. It would seem necessary to give some indication of how the Government's finances will be related to this plan.**

**In addition, Regional Public Consultations should be held every two years to maintain and advance public interest and involvement as regards the successes, failures and improvements in carrying out the five year plan.**

Mervyn Russell  
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