

Recommendations to strengthen C-12:

- Bill C-12 must place greater emphasis on science and expertise and less emphasis on politics by **strengthening the Advisory body's role in establishing targets, plans and reports, and ensure that the body is comprised of independent experts. The Advisory body should also prepare regular impact reports that assess the risks of current and predicted climate impacts in Canada, to inform adaptation planning.**
- Bill C-12 must actually hold government to account by prescribing **robust minimum standards** for planning and reporting, and imposing a legal obligation to meet the established targets
- Bill C-12 should ensure targets and plans are set further in advance, provide for earlier and more regular progress reporting, and place a low cap on the use of international offsets (or even restrict those offsets altogether, other than to exceed targets).
- Without undermining the need for the federal government to take a leadership role and be willing to backstop climate action where necessary, Bill C-12 should also incentivize and facilitate provincial ambition and recognize shared action. Bill C-12 must also require transparency about the status and direction of greenhouse gas emissions in sub-national jurisdictions.
- Bill C-12 must reflect Canada's commitment to enacting UNDRIP and must include means by which Indigenous peoples can be full participants in climate action.
- In amending Bill C-12, Parliamentarians must ensure a strong relationship between climate accountability and just and equitable workforce transition planning.

Weaknesses of C-12 (each of the recommendations is meant to address each of these weaknesses, in turn):

1. Ambition now, not later:

Setting a legislated target of net zero emissions by 2050 is critical, but Bill C-12 must also provide meaningful accountability "checkpoints" over the next ten years – a period deemed crucial by the IPCC for avoiding catastrophic climate change.

Further, Bill C-12 does not require the Minister to consider expert advice when setting emission reduction targets at five-year intervals, increasing the risk that political pressure will lead to weaker targets.

As a wealthy country with high historic and per capita emissions, Canada's targets should be significantly more ambitious than the benchmarks set by the IPCC of 45% global GHG reductions by 2030 and net-zero by 2050.

C-12 uses milestone targets rather than carbon budgets. That, combined with infrequent accountability plans/reports (see below) means there are inadequate accountability checkpoints in the crucial next decade. The emissions pathway between today and 2030 goes through 2025. Once the government has a plan for a 2030 target, there is no justifiable reason to *not* hold the government accountable in 2025.

2. Strong and independent expertise:

The role of the advisory body must be strengthened and solidified. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we can't let politics interfere with the importance of scientific advice.

Rather than establish one advisory committee, Bill C-12 creates an "Advisory Body" responsible for making policy recommendations on how to achieve the targets, and requires the Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) to prepare reports on the implementation of measures every five years. The two institutions lack the mandate and capacity to properly hold the Government to account. Crucially, neither body has an explicit mandate to advise on the long-term or milestone targets.

It is crucial that the Advisory body be comprised of independent experts and have the capacity and resources to conduct the detailed analysis necessary to advise on targets and plans and to monitor government progress.

3. Accountability in the law, not on the shoulders of Canadians:

There must be consequences for failure at every level. As it stands, Bill C-12 imposes weak obligations on government that will be difficult to enforce. To break the cycle of missed GHG emissions reductions targets, we need a law that holds government to account.

Though Bill C-12 requires a rolling cycle of planning and reporting against the five-year milestones and the long-term targets, as it stands the Bill provides too much wiggle room to set weak targets and table plans that are light on details. Fixing those gaps will mean setting clear and unqualified obligations on the Minister to meet or exceed robust minimum standards when setting targets and establishing plans, and clearly demonstrating how the targets will be met with robust modelling. It also means requiring the Minister to actually meet the targets, rather than just plan to meet them.

Also, the Advisory Body has no clear role in progress reporting, which means that the Government self-determines whether it is on track to meeting the targets. An independent assessment would clearly allow for greater public confidence in those reports. That the Assessment Report comes two years after the milestone year makes it too late to make up for missed reductions, even if it does come with recommendations for additional actions.

4. Certainty and credibility:

The infrequency and potential weakness of the accountability checkpoints has consequences beyond 2030. Certainty matters for the Canadian public, investors and business, and the international community.

Bill C-12 requires the Minister to set targets and plans to achieve them only five years in advance. For 2030 and later, a longer period (e.g. ten years; the U.K. set 12 years) would allow for better planning and the development of policies and programs, and provides medium-term certainty over Canada's emissions trajectory.

There is also a risk that Canada will place undue reliance on carbon credits and offsets (generated by emissions reductions in other countries) to achieve its targets instead of reducing domestic emissions. For example, Sweden's *Climate Act* limits offsets to 15% of its 2050 goal.

5. Sharing the effort across Canada:

The result of Canadian federalism and our regional disparity in emissions requires an ongoing conversation about how to share the effort of reducing our GHG emissions between federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, and respect Indigenous rights and authority. Bill C-12 doesn't take this historic opportunity to institutionalize that conversation, let alone push for the cooperative federalism that the challenge of climate change requires.

Regards..... Roman Talkowski