



# Leadnow Brief on Bill C-12:

## SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE CANADIAN NET ZERO EMISSIONS CLIMATE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Submitted May 17th, 2021 to the House of  
Commons Standing Committee on Environment  
and Sustainable Development

**leadnow**

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## Summary

### 37,626 signatures

Over 37,000 people across Canada signed petitions in support of strengthening Bill C-12 to ensure Canada's climate action is based in science, puts communities and workers first, and creates true government accountability.

### 4,085 comments submitted

Thousands of people across Canada shared their personal experiences to inform this submission. These comments overwhelmingly support strengthening Bill C-12 in order to implement a bold climate law in Canada.

### Unanimous support for a 2025 climate target

Almost every person (98.2%) who submitted a comment indicated that they think the Canadian government shouldn't delay climate action any longer and should set a target to cut emissions by 2025, to ensure Canada is on track to tackle the climate crisis.

## Context

Leadnow is an independent political advocacy organization made up of hundreds of thousands of people from across Canada. We help Canadians take action on the issues that they care about by providing non-partisan opportunities for democratic engagement, both online and offline.

We welcome this opportunity to comment as part of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's study of Bill C-12. As an organization with a mission to increase public participation in the democratic process, we have invited our community to submit comments to be included as part of this brief.

**Over 4,000 people from across the country have submitted their comments in support of a climate law that is based in science, puts communities and workers first, and creates true government accountability.**

We have also joined with the climate justice organization, 350 Canada, to gather petition signatures in support of critical amendments to Bill C-12: Canadian Net Zero Emissions Climate Accountability Act. Combined, over 37,500 people have signed these petitions. The full petition text can be found at [www.leadnow.ca/bill-c-12/](http://www.leadnow.ca/bill-c-12/) and <https://act.350.org/act/c-12-response/>.

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**350**  
canada

## Introduction

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development,

Bill C-12 is a historic piece of climate legislation, which could finally help Canada meet its climate targets. It could put us on a path toward a livable climate future. However, without crucial amendments to strengthen the Bill, it could delay urgent climate action and fail to enact any real government accountability.

People across Canada are counting on you to use your mandate within the ENVI committee to strengthen Bill C-12 and bring it in line with climate science. As concerned citizens, we are calling on you all to support the following key amendments to Bill C-12 to meet the climate crisis at the scale required:

- **Take bold action now, based on science and independent expertise.** Set the first emissions target for 2025, instead of delaying climate action until it's too late.
- **Put workers and communities first, no exceptions.** Bill C-12 should align with Canada's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and set targets for job creation to ensure no worker gets left behind as we transition to a sustainable economy.
- **Create true legal accountability for government.** Set clear, unconditional obligations on the Minister of Environment to meet Canada's climate targets.

The climate emergency demands bold action, and courageous leadership. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it's that governments can act when the political will is there. We urge you to strengthen Bill C-12 so it can be truly successful in its goal of enabling strong action to prevent the climate crisis.

*As a parent of a toddler, I am terrified of what a world wrecked by the climate crisis will bring. Our current trajectory is warming an unthinkable 3-4 degrees by 2100. If we fail to take drastic action, my son will be living in a world that is markedly less safe than the one we are living in now.*

Leadnow member

*Climate change isn't something we can leave for future generations to deal with – its effects are already evident. As a 29-year-old, I am already scared for what the world could look like when I'm 40, 50, or 60 years old if we do nothing, or stick to plans that set remote targets like zero emissions by 2050. The best time to start making significant, radical steps toward reducing carbon emissions was yesterday.*

Dallas, 29 years old, British Columbia

**Amendment #1:** Take bold action now, based on science and independent expertise. Set the first emissions target for 2025, instead of delaying climate action until it's too late.

The IPCC has deemed the next decade as crucial if we are to avert climate catastrophe.<sup>1</sup> We cannot wait until 2030 to find out if we're on track; by then it will be far too late to change course. Bill C-12 must provide a target to cut emissions by 2025, informed by the best available independent and scientific data.

*2030 is too far away. Canada has never met a climate target yet. We need to know we're on track to achieve the 2030 target. My 4 year old will be 13 years old in 2030. That's too long to wait for the first target. I want to know that we're on track to have the best chance of ensuring a safe and healthy future for my kids.*

Eugenie, 37 years old, Ontario

*Setting a clear goal, that includes consequences for not attaining that goal, is the only way our country will be held accountable for its contribution to global climate change.*

Rachel, 25 years old, British Columbia

*Accountability is not something that starts many years down the road. True accountability must start immediately, and setting a target for 2025 will help the government to demonstrate it is truly committed to climate accountability.*

Mark, 45 years old, Ontario

*The data is clear: we cannot delay any longer. Cuts in emissions must start now, and they must grow substantially this decade. Anything less is a betrayal of our children.*

Blake, 41 years old, Quebec

*I'm 74. Look at how our world climate has changed in my lifetime. It terrifies me what we're leaving my grandchildren and their grandchildren to deal with if we don't set climate controls now.*

Paul, 74 years old, Ontario

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>

## **Amendment #2:** Put workers and communities first, no exceptions.

Any climate legislation must uphold the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. As such, Bill C-12 should align with Canada's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

It's crucial that our government recognizes that climate change will not impact every community equally, and takes action to mitigate the impact of climate change on the frontline communities most affected. This includes setting targets for job creation to ensure no worker gets left behind as we transition to a sustainable economy.

Insofar Bill C-12 does not deliver on these important and necessary aspects of climate action, we expect action from the government in subsequent bills on these measures.

*My Indigenous relatives sacrificed everything to ensure our survival. They were concerned about the generations ahead, not just the generation at the time. Our politicians should operate under the same premise and concerns.*

Justine, 30 years old, Alberta

*I'm concerned that we've built over most of our prime agricultural and wetlands in Southern Ontario, that many of our rivers and lakes are poisoned, that the greenbelt is shrinking, species are in decline, our aquifers of clean drinking water are depleted, forest fires are becoming more common, extractives have been allowed to run amok, and Indigenous peoples have been forced off their land – to name a few. I'm worried my children will grow up in a concrete wasteland with no clean water and poor food security.*

Leadnow member, Ontario

*All investments in oil or fossil fuels must stop now. Indigenous sovereignty must be top priority in our climate efforts and drinkable water must be given to all communities.*

Maïna , 23 years old, New Brunswick

*Canada should be a climate leader! Our country is known for abundant fresh water and resources, beautiful landscapes and moderate politics. But instead of protecting the things that make Canada a natural wonder and respecting the rights of Indigenous people who were here long before white settlers, we exploit these resources with little regard to the environment. We must act now to cut greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to set an example for the rest of the world that climate change action cannot wait!*

Alex, 31 years old, Ontario

## **Amendment #3:** Create true legal accountability for government.

The consequences of failing to meet our climate targets are dire — including extreme weather events, forest fires and flooding, rising sea levels, to mass displacement. We need climate targets that will ensure our climate action meets the scale science says is necessary to prevent this climate catastrophe. However, for targets to be effective, they must be backed by measures to hold the government accountable for meeting them; and consequences for failure to meet them. As it stands, Bill C-12 only imposes weak obligations on governments to meet their climate commitments. The Bill must set clear, unconditional obligations on the Minister of Environment to meet Canada's climate targets.

*Enforcement and accountability are important because governments can change....Some even disbelieve the overwhelming scientific evidence that we are in the early stages of climate disruption. We MUST meet and exceed our emissions reduction targets regardless of who is in power.*

Virgil, 54 years old, Manitoba

*Of course we need to enforce accountability. The Federal Government has set many emission targets before, and every one of them they have missed so far.*

Bruce, 81 years old, Ontario

*We need to make goals that we will keep. We absolutely cannot afford to let this one slip. We need to be accountable to our climate targets...If policy isn't written with accountability how are we ever going to have consistency through time to make meaningful change?*

Mollie, 31 years old, Alberta

*We are routinely disappointed by the federal government's failure to keep its promises — the gap between talk and action. Enforcement would make it more likely that election promises would be a reliable basis for my vote.*

Glennelda, 75 years old, Manitoba

*Make no mistake: For many of us, this is the number one issue for government, for politics, and for the next election. Failure to legislate adequate enforcement mechanisms with targets in 2025 is equivalent to deliberately choosing to fail at delivering on climate commitments. We've seen decades of failure to deliver on promises... We need action, now, on this clear and present danger.*

Walter, 68 years old, Alberta



## Conclusion

Bill C-12 is a critical opportunity to make sure Canada never misses another climate target — if MPs support amendments to strengthen the Bill.

In 2019, voters elected MPs with a mandate to implement bold climate action. We urge you to amend Bill C-12 to ensure it is based in science, puts communities and workers first, and creates true government accountability.

*Canada has not met one single emissions target. We have run out of time to delay bold action. This target needs to be set for 2025 and must be met. Young people are counting on this... don't let them down.*

Penny, 61 years old, British Columbia

*My adult children are so worried about the future of our planet that they don't want to have their own children, for fear of what kind of world they will live in. They are also very cynical about our politicians' resolve to address climate change seriously. Please give them hope and prove them wrong! Thank you!*

Jean-Claude, 61 years old, Nova Scotia

If you have any questions about the content of this brief, or on Leadnow's campaign for a world-class climate accountability law, please contact Claire Gallagher, Campaigns Manager, at 1-855-532-3609 ext 77 or [claire@leadnow.ca](mailto:claire@leadnow.ca)

