

Montreal, April 19, 2022

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources – Study on creating a fair and equitable Canadian energy transformation

Re: Brief - Fédération des travailleurs et des travailleuses du Québec

Dear Sir or Madam:

First of all, we would like to thank you for inviting us to appear before the committee on the fair and equitable transformation of Canada's energy sector.

The FTQ is the largest labour federation in Quebec, with over 600,000 members, in all sectors of activity, including energy. As a result, we are no strangers to the issues facing this sector. The FTQ has also developed expertise in just transition over the past six years.

First and foremost, we understand the importance of addressing the energy situation in Canada, and we commend the government for considering just transition principles to achieve this. However, we believe that the government is moving in the wrong direction by applying the just transition lens only to the energy sector. We recommend a holistic approach that includes all sectors of activity. In this regard, we deplore the fact that this file no longer appears in the Minister of the Environment's mandate letters. We are concerned that the concept of just transition is being reduced to an issue of skills training in the energy sector. The assigned mandate letters containing just transition hint at this fear.

The most recent IPCC report on adaptation could not be clearer: we need to decarbonize and transform our entire economy now, and move away from fossil fuels. The report also indicates that we have the means to do this and that it must be done according to the just transition concept.

This concept does not need to be defined, but adapted to Canada's diverse realities. By signing the *Paris Agreement*, the *Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration* and, more recently, the *Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Internationally* declaration at COP26, Canada has all the parameters necessary to quickly adopt a just transition plan and mechanisms. We invite you to refer to these various agreements and declarations.

Ultimately, it is about mobilizing all workplaces and their communities. It is only in this way we can ensure that no one is left behind in the transformation and decarbonization of our economy. We must also ensure that we have adequate funding and mechanisms that demand results. The European Union's Just Transition Fund is a good example.

In concrete terms, the Government of Canada must decide on real mechanisms, such as the obligation to set up joint committees on just transition in the workplace. Furthermore, just transition can only be reduced to a training-employment match, which is much broader. If jobs are lost, a whole range of accompanying measures must be adopted. To that end, we call on the Government of Canada to act now on the recommendations of the Just Transition Task Force of Canada to meet with communities and coal power workers.

Just transition is also about fairness, and the government must ensure that the new jobs created are of high quality and that everyone has access to them. We also believe that the communities have a voice. We therefore recommend that the government follow up on the federal coal task force proposal and establish just transition centres.

Finally, we are calling on the government to take strong leadership on this issue. It is in charge. We have welcomed consultations since last summer and the inclusion of the just transition concept in the 2030 GHG reduction plan. However, we believe that the process leading to just transition legislation must be inclusive and that unions must be at the heart of the process, together with employer organizations. That is why we find the idea of setting up another advisory council outdated. We are convinced that we are ready for a more effective structure. In this regard, we recommend that you study the two commissions on just transition in Scotland and Ireland, as well as the work done by Spain.

The FTQ believes that the government should put in place a structure similar to a Crown corporation. We also encourage the government to appoint a deputy minister for just transition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis Bolduc', written over a horizontal line.

Denis Bolduc
General Secretary

DB/RP/mk
Sepb-574