

Mr. John Aldag, M.P.
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment
and Sustainable Development
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague:

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for its important report entitled *Clean Growth and Climate Change in Canada: Forestry, Agriculture and Waste*, which was tabled in the House of Commons on April 9, 2019. As Chair of the Standing Committee, please accept this letter as the Government's response to the report.

The report and its 16 recommendations provide clear direction on ways the Government of Canada could further increase its leadership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada's forestry, agriculture and waste sectors. Together, these sectors account for about 13 percent of this country's greenhouse gas emissions. As well, agricultural lands, managed forests, and the harvested wood derived from forests store carbon. Therefore, it is vital that the Government identifies and advances new mitigation opportunities to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration as it continues to work with provinces, territories and other partners.

The Government of Canada has a strong foundation to build on thanks to the hard work of Canadians and the adoption of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change in 2016.

The Pan-Canadian Framework includes concrete actions from federal, provincial and territorial governments across all sectors of the Canadian economy. Through this comprehensive plan, the federal government is already taking many actions consistent with the Standing Committee's report recommendations. These actions include driving emissions reductions and clean growth by improving and increasing carbon sinks; increasing the amount of renewable and low-carbon fuels used in transportation, industry and buildings under the proposed regulations for the Clean Fuel Standard; updating building codes to allow for more use of sustainably grown and harvested wood; using waste products from forestry, agriculture and landfills to create sustainable energy sources; and

collaborating with Canadian companies, academics and other stakeholders to develop new technologies to reduce emissions. The Government is proud to communicate its recent achievements in these areas.

Canada has been a world leader in sustainable forest management practices for many years. The Government of Canada will continue to support the forest sector's efforts to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions it releases and to store more carbon. With regard to Recommendation 1 in the Standing Committee's report, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers endorsed *A Forest Bioeconomy Framework for Canada* in 2017. Key components include supporting the supply and demand of advanced bioproducts and its underlying innovation. In addition, through the Forest Innovation Program, the Government supports the forest sector's ongoing transformation through the development and adoption of innovative science-based solutions.

Furthermore, the federal government has invested \$40 million in the Green Construction through Wood Program in order to encourage greater use of wood in construction projects in Canada. In 2018, this program held a call for expressions of interest for low-rise commercial buildings and timber bridges, and is negotiating agreements for tall wood demonstration projects. The Government of Canada recently supported an amendment to Bill C-354, An Act to amend the *Department of Public Works and Government Services Act* (use of wood), which would recognize wood and other sustainable building materials that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in federal government procurement if it receives royal assent. Moreover, the BioHeat stream of the Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities program will dedicate approximately \$55 million to support transitions from fossil fuel heating to wood-based bioheating, and expects funding about 25 communities to undertake projects. Lastly, related to Recommendation 5, Canada led a national conversation on wildfire research needs and priorities that was published in 2018 as the multi-stakeholder *Blueprint for Wildland Fire Science in Canada (2019–2029)*.

The Government of Canada is likewise encouraging greenhouse gas emissions reductions and increased stored carbon from Canada's agricultural sector. The country's hardworking farmers, and the agriculture sector as a whole, have a solid track record of using sound management practices, innovation, and new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change impacts. Consistent with the Standing Committee's recommendations, the federal government is already making significant investments to enable the Canadian agriculture sector to better address climate change.

Recommendation 7 calls for supporting research and development. Canada currently has more than 30 ongoing research projects related to carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is conducting research and developing new agricultural

technologies and tools to improve the use efficiency of agricultural production resources (including nutrients, pesticides and water) in addition to supporting soil conservation measures through conservation cropping.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership launched programs like the Agrilnnovate program (a five-year, up to \$128 million, initiative to increase sector sustainability) and the AgriScience Program (to support priority areas such as the transformation of agricultural products into biofuels, sustainable farming, soil health, resiliency, and the adaptation of crops to climate change). The Agricultural Clean Technology Program was announced in 2018 to support the research, development and adoption of clean technologies through investments in, and promotion of, precision agriculture and agri-based bioproducts. This program will help Canadian farmers access innovative agricultural technologies, as recommended in the Standing Committee's report. As well, the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund is providing more than \$16 million for agriculture sector projects in many provinces and territories.

The waste sector is another area where the Government of Canada is committed to supporting emissions reductions. Key to this approach is finding smart ways to limit the amount of waste Canadians, governments and businesses produce. Aligned with Recommendation 14, the Government is taking a leadership role in greening its operations. This includes taking steps to reduce the environmental impact of waste from real property management; and limiting plastic waste by reusing, recycling and reducing unnecessary single-use plastics.

The federal government is also working with provinces and territories through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to develop a Canada-wide action plan on zero plastic waste. This proposed plan aims to help clean up communities and waterways in the country, keep the value of plastics in the economy, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A recent study found that there are significant benefits to Canada from a zero plastic waste economy like \$500 million of annual costs avoided, 42 000 direct and indirect jobs created, and annual greenhouse gas emissions savings of 1.82 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

As well, Canada is in the process of developing A Food Policy for Canada, with reducing food waste as a key area for near-term action. Recognizing the opportunities for innovation and advancement in the waste sector, the Pan-Canadian Framework also commits to work with provinces and territories to identify opportunities in order to produce renewable fuels and bioproducts such as the generation of renewable fuel from waste. In addition, Budget 2019 announced a one-time transfer to municipalities and First Nations communities to address short-term priorities of which both wastewater and solid waste are eligible funding areas.

Canada's results, as communicated in public annual reports, demonstrate that actions under the Pan-Canadian Framework are on track. Investments are being made across jurisdictions to reduce emissions; enhance and protect carbon stored in forests, wetlands and agricultural soils; and, at the same time, consider adaptation actions that could help improve sectoral resilience to climate change. The Government's comprehensive climate change plan puts Canada on a path toward meeting its Paris Agreement commitment of a 30-percent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030.

While the federal government has taken strong actions, it must remain ambitious and forward-looking on climate change. The Government of Canada welcomes the recommendations of the Standing Committee. The Government will use them to guide policy and engagement as it continues to collaborate with partners to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon stored in these important sectors.

Furthermore, I respectfully acknowledge the dissenting report by the Official Opposition. The Government of Canada thanks the members of the Conservative Party of Canada for their support to improve the management of wetlands, farmlands and forests in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the sequestration of carbon in forests and on farms. The federal government is proud to have worked productively with provinces and territories on reducing emissions from these sectors through the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework. Consistent with the spirit of the recommendations from the Official Opposition, the Government will continue to work collaboratively in areas of shared jurisdiction with provinces and territories, as well as to advance cost-effective policies and programs to reduce emissions.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation to all the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, their staff and other officials, as well as the witnesses who provided testimony to help the Standing Committee deliver this important report.

Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Joyce Murray, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Navdeep Singh Bains, P.C., M.P.