



BRIEFING: Environment and Climate Change Consultation – London, Ontario

September 19, 2016

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Member of Parliament, Ottawa Centre

Dear Minister McKenna,

In mid-August, the offices of Peter Fragiskatos (M.P., London North Centre) and Kate Young (M.P., London West) organized a joint consultation on the environment and climate change for residents of London, Ontario. The event was well attended (approximately 180 people) and the community was pleased that an open, honest and frank conversation was being had regarding this important topic.

In what follows, please find a concise overview of the most crucial points that were raised when discussing the five main themes included within the consultation outline.

How and where to reduce emissions?

Those attending the consultation indicated that more tax incentives are needed in order to encourage positive and real change. For example, the purchasing of green technologies and automobiles requires incentive programs that will make it easier for every day Canadians to institute these important changes.

The federal government should also privilege those public transit projects that prioritize the reduction of Greenhouse Gases. Public investment in infrastructure is not only a tool that can boost economic growth. It can also be relied upon by the federal government as a way to help municipalities combat the problem of urban sprawl and the increase in carbon emissions this naturally leads to.

It should be noted that while the infrastructure and environment departments obviously function as separate entities, there was a clear expectation among those who spoke to us that there exists a strong interconnection between the two and that this ought to encourage an ongoing policy conversation.



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Ideas for new technology and job creation:

It was noted that solar and wind technology hold great promise because they can help provide a strong income for individuals and families, while also helping to combat carbon emissions. Though investing in these technologies and their development is looked upon with risk by many in the private sector, the federal government has a responsibility to prioritize investment in research and development for the clean technology sector.

The idea of so-called "green bonds" was mentioned by a few individuals as a way of encouraging the development of clean technologies. Unfortunately, because of limited public knowledge on the subject, a robust discussion could not take place. This indicates a need to promote greater understanding of what such a measure may look like if it is pursued by our government in a serious way.

Calls to stop the extraction of oil were expressed by some. Interestingly, those who did so also acknowledged support for federal investment in clean technologies because they can help transition Canada to an oil-free economy.

What is the best way to implement a price on carbon?

The best way to implement a price on carbon is a revenue-neutral carbon tax modelled on British Columbia's, but with a special focus on taxing gasoline. The money would go to aforementioned renewable energy and R&D projects. Many Canadians were interested in hearing if the government would be taxing carbon dioxide, or methane. How would the government be pricing carbon? Large portions of the audience were in favour of using incentives to reduce carbon rather than a tax. A suggestion as an incentive to reduce carbon is to get a cash rebate for staying under a certain number set out by the government. The idea of a carbon tax is still giving the message to Canadians that producing carbon is acceptable as long as you are paying the carbon tax and does not solve the problem of high carbon emissions.



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What can Canada do to better adapt to impacts of climate change and support Indigenous communities or other affected community groups?

To better adapt to climate change's impacts, Canada can improve assistance for Indigenous peoples, since they have been severely affected by climate change. Indigenous communities live on the land. They are subsistence farmers, herders, fishers, and hunters, with collective knowledge about the ecology of their surroundings. With that knowledge and experience, even tiny changes in water cycles, wildlife, soil, and weather are difficult to ignore. Government assistance should contain not only monetary funding, but also a sizeable support network. Indigenous communities are critical to any discussion of climate change since they are affected by it every day. Also, all new development of homes must be conscious of climate change-related issues that could affect the homes (e.g. flooding).

In addition, since plants take CO₂ out of the atmosphere, more plants should be planted and perhaps follow a target set by municipal, provincial or federal government(s). Also, if, as suggested, vegan eating is encouraged, animal agriculture producers will need financial assistance as they transition to producing more plant based foods. Education on the importance of plant based foods in schools would encourage this new shift in nutrition.

Many Indigenous groups have been actively fighting against the pipeline construction as it does affect the land in Southwestern Ontario. Canadians feel there has not been consultation on this project from the National Energy Board and the Government of Canada.

General comments on climate change reduction:

We live in a wasteful society, and as a result we are in a crisis situation at the moment. An immediate and radical shift is needed to get from that crisis situation to where we need to be, and youth engagement, including through the education system, is key to that shift. In that shift, we must recycle and reuse what we can, and try innovative ways to do so such as generating power from garbage.

Canadians must be more energy-efficient in buildings and transportation, plant more trees and reduce consumption of fossil fuels. We need to impose a revenue-neutral carbon tax and various clean energy subsidies, and replace animal agriculture with plant agriculture. As a nation, we need to use our clout to influence other nations to also follow a green shift for the betterment of our earth. Every citizen of Canada must be prepared to make sacrifices in daily luxuries and



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participate in this shift. The government of Canada should be holding businesses more accountable to keep the environment a top priority.

Canadians would like to see the Government of Canada make the right environmental changes as soon as possible since the effects of climate change is prevalent and destructive.

Thank you for being supportive of this process and for empowering Members of Parliament to discuss climate change and environment issues with their constituents. We both genuinely enjoyed the opportunity to reach out in this way and on such an important subject. Should you wish to discuss anything raised throughout this report, please feel free to contact us whenever it is convenient.

Best regards,

Peter Fragiskatos
Member of Parliament (MP)
London North Centre

Kate Young
Member of Parliament (MP)
London West