



MODERATOR OF THE 146TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Rev. Daniel D. Scott, B.A., M.C.S, M.Div., D. Min.

December 14, 2021

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

The Hon. Steven Guilbeault P.C., M.P.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau P.C., M.P.
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
marie-claude.bibeau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Guilbeault and Minister Bibeau,

Greetings from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. At its online meeting June 6-9, 2021, the General Assembly considered and adopted reports on ecological justice and the climate crisis.

This year has seen a significant number of climate change related events both here in Canada and across the world. The devastation of heat domes, fires, floods and mudslides in British Columbia this year point to the complex interplay of regional climate change impacts. The increasing intensity of storms and other weather phenomena has made apparent the insufficient capacity of many infrastructure and agricultural practices to withstand such intense phenomena. There is a clear need for sustained, comprehensive collection, analysis, and publication of regional data on weather, flooding and droughts to deepen our understanding of how changing climate is affecting people, agriculture, infrastructure and broader ecological systems. All levels of government will need to work together to prepare for emergent, climate-related disasters. The church encourages the Government to prioritize and assist in coordinating this much needed area of research.

The church appreciates the Government's commitment to the Paris Agreement target to keep global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius and acknowledge Canada's 2021 updated Nationally Determined Contribution target to reduce carbon emission by 40-45% by 2030. This is a positive step. According to the report *Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks: Executive Summary 2021*, Canada represented approximately 1.5% of global GHG emissions in 2017. In spite of declining emissions from 2005, GHG emissions increased between 2018 and 2019, and Canada remains one of the highest per capita emitters. It is alarming that Canada's emission in the Oil and Gas and Transport sectors are increasing, even as these emissions are being offset by reductions in other sectors.

The church supports and strongly encourages the Government to implement "just transition" and "just recovery" programs that are necessary to move Canada into a more sustainable economy, even as the world is struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Such programs would assist those whose livelihoods are affected by the difficult but necessary changes Canada must make toward a low-carbon

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir

economy, while working to support the rights and dignity of people affected by these changes. The Government of Canada's On-Farm Climate Action Fund, for example, is a positive step that assists farmers to adapt in the climate crisis. Indigenous communities and communities in the global south are already disproportionately affected by a changing climate and have been even further disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Just transition and recovery programs must be grounded in human rights, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Paris Agreement target is critical, and if missed, will continue to cause ecological devastation, including mass species extinction, disruption of ecosystems, and the loss of biodiversity. The World Wildlife Federation – Canada's 2017 Living Planet Report records that mammal populations in Canada declined by 43% between 1970 and 2014; amphibians and reptiles declined by 34%, fish populations by 20% because of habitat destruction and climate change. Some of the sharpest drops have been seen in population of grassland and shore birds, and waterfowl. The church appreciates the Government's support for the UN Convention on Biodiversity – this is needed leadership. Canada's initiative to increase protected areas of marine and coast land is a positive example of this work. But Canada needs a comprehensive plan to meet its other biodiversity targets and a regularized and transparent reporting system. The church urges the government to take these next steps.

The Government of Canada is only one of many parties that needs to come together to address the climate crisis, but the federal government's leadership and coordination will be crucial. We thank you for the efforts you have already made and look forward to hearing how the government will increase its efforts to meet the increased challenges. Meanwhile, please rest assured of our prayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel D. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott
Moderator
The Presbyterian Church in Canada