



Log it and burn it: Wood pellets, climate and British Columbia's deepening forest crisis

BY BEN PARFITT

Over the past decade, shipments of wood pellets from British Columbia to buyers including the United Kingdom, Japan and South Korea have exploded, more than doubling between 2014 and 2023.

But the trade in pellets to Japan has been nothing short of stunning, moving from a modest 61,700 tonnes 10 years ago to nearly 1.7 million tonnes in 2023.

Late last year, I was invited by three non-governmental organizations in Japan to see how that international trade is playing out in the island nation, which was rocked by a horrific earthquake and tsunami in 2011 that triggered an energy crisis in the country.

The damage sustained to a number of nuclear reactors by the tsunami forced Japan to find energy from new sources, including thermal electricity plants fired on wood pellets.

I saw firsthand a number of those plants either under construction or just opened on the coastal plain where the tsunami had struck. The speed and scale of work was stunning.

The non-governmental organizations had invited me to tour the country along with Michelle Connolly, director of the Prince George-based organization Conservation North. They wanted us to see firsthand what that growth looked like and to have us explain what such growth implied for the forests in our home country and province.

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The central message I conveyed—to elected representatives of Japan's ruling and opposition parties, forestry and trade officials, bioenergy industry representatives, financial institutions underwriting the costs of new bioenergy plants, environmental and business journalists and general audiences in Tokyo and Sendai, a coastal city in the direct eye of the tsunami and where new wood pellet-fired thermal electricity plants have been built—is that logging in BC is fundamentally unsustainable.

The rapid loss of primary forests (that haven't been subject to industrialization) is causing a deepening ecological and economic crisis. And that crisis will soon have consequences for countries like Japan that may be unable to access anywhere near the same amount of forest products they once did from BC.

Major trends in BC highlight the deepening crisis.

Logging rates have fallen precipitously over the last decade and will continue in the decade to come, with the likely result that in a 20-year span logging rates will have fallen by half.

The loss of forests is mirrored in a humbling decline in the number of sawmills in the province. In 2005, there were 111

large mills operating full tilt in BC. By 2035, it is estimated that this number will have more than halved, reducing to just 47.

Massive, uncontrolled wildfires are also having a devastating impact on “fibre supply” to make wood pellets and other forest products, with 2.5% of the provincial land base burned in wildfires in 2023 alone.

Wood pellet mills in BC continue to process large amounts of whole trees taken from the province's shrinking primary forests as if it was business as usual.

Meanwhile, wood pellet mills in BC continue to process large amounts of whole trees taken from the province's shrinking primary forests as if it was business as usual.

This is a recipe for disaster for buyers and sellers alike. It cannot be sustained and requires that BC get its forestry house in order.

My report, published in late April, highlights both the supply and demand side of the equation and argues that only when BC's forests are managed on an ecological footing can buyers of wood pellets be assured of something approaching a reasonable and steady supply.

It concludes with six key recommendations.

First, remaining primary and old-growth forests must be conserved.

Second, forest lands in the province must be zoned with priority given to conservation, ecological restoration and a defined but much smaller area of forestland given to timber production.

Third, full and transparent accounting of all wood fibre used by the pellet industry must be required by law.

Fourth, wood pellet mills must be prohibited from using whole trees to make their product and be required to use only wood waste or cuttings from tree plantations.

Fifth, the carbon tax should be applied to wood waste burned at BC logging operations, something that would encourage wood being brought to mills instead, including pellet facilities.

Lastly, BC should place a premium on the production of solid wood products first. Because when wood pellets are burned, massive amounts of greenhouse gases are added to our Earth's overheating atmosphere.

Without BC getting its ecological house in order, Japan and other wood pellet buyers cannot depend on the province to meet their energy needs.



PHOTO: STAND EARTH. COVER PHOTO: STAND EARTH



Ben Parfitt is the resource policy analyst at the CCPA-BC.

Vancouver's go-slow multiplex policy could blow a hole in provincial housing projections

BY ALEX HEMINGWAY

The long reign of exclusionary single-family zoning is being challenged in British Columbia—and none too soon amid a severe housing shortage.



The BC government has unveiled major pieces of housing legislation in recent months, including a policy requiring cities to allow multiplexes with three to six homes on huge portions of land where they have long blocked all but single-family houses.

According to modelling carried out by independent experts, this provincial multiplex policy could mean completion of more than 130,000 badly needed new homes over 10 years.

To achieve this level of housing creation, however, all cities would need to meet or exceed new provincial standards in their updated zoning rules. But the City of Vancouver is set to become a major wrench in the works as its own multiplex policy falls far short of those standards.

While it does allow multiplexes, Vancouver's policy severely limits total housing floor space for each project, adding only 16% to the Floor Area Ratio over the previous zoning. This undermines the viability of many potential multiplex projects and city staff expect only 150 multiplexes will be built per year.

In fact, if Vancouver doesn't amend its multiplex policy to meet higher provincial standards, about 30,000 net new homes projected to be created under the provincial rules won't actually get built according to modelling commissioned by the BC government.

But the provincial legislation doesn't apply in areas where multiplexes are already allowed, and Vancouver put its policy in place a few months prior to the law. As a result, the province is only "strongly encouraging"—not requiring—the City of Vancouver to align with its higher standards.

This "Vancouver problem" could be compounded if other municipalities also use wiggle room in the legislation to attempt to sidestep its spirit and intention.

While BC municipalities must update their zoning bylaws to reflect the provincial legislation (by the end of June 2024), many of the new provincial standards are not strictly binding. Instead, they're provided to municipalities in a policy manual as "expectations" and "guidelines". This includes the crucial question of how much additional housing floor space will be allowed on a lot.

/// Vancouver's policy severely limits total housing floor space for each project, adding only 16% to the Floor Area Ratio over the previous zoning.

Given the track record of cities adopting restrictive and exclusionary zoning policies, this light touch approach to provincial regulation is concerning.

If cities don't step up their game, the province should implement its standards as binding "alternative minimum zoning" that would apply wherever cities fail to meet these standards in their bylaws. Ironically, this is how the media and public likely already expect the new provincial rules to work.

Of course, zoning reform is only one part of addressing the housing crisis. We urgently need a massive build out of non-market housing (well-funded by government), stronger tenants' rights, taxation of land wealth and the expansion of renter power through organizing.



Alex Hemingway is a senior economist at the CCPA-BC.



A Paradox in COVID-19 Recovery: Women workers bear pandemic burden as hotel industry prospers

BY ALICE MÜRAGE, MICHELLE TRAVIS AND VÉRONIQUE SIOUFI

Government COVID-19 subsidies were meant to help BC's hotel sector survive pandemic shut downs. But while the hotel industry is doing better than ever, workers—who are predominantly racialized and immigrant women—are not.

The hospitality and tourism industry is a major driver of BC's economy, with room revenues alone generating \$3.2 billion in 2019.

Essential to this sector is work done by older, racialized, predominantly immigrant, women hotel workers who are overrepresented in roles such as room attendants. These workers have long been underpaid for this physically demanding work with limited upward mobility.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a devastating upheaval in their work lives. Closures and travel restrictions—especially in the first wave of the pandemic—impacted both international and domestic tourism and recreation activities upon which the hotel sector depends. The hotel industry responded by offloading these economic pressures onto their already precarious workforce through layoffs, understaffing and on-call scheduling.

Approximately 50,000 BC hotel workers were laid-off with little clarity on when, or if, they would be called back to work. The federal and provincial governments introduced programs to support businesses hard-hit by the pandemic as early as March 2020 with the aim of keeping employees on the payroll. The hotel industry benefited from wage and rent subsidies and

loans through an array of government programs, and between March 2020 and May 2021, BC's accommodations and food services sector received over \$1.2 billion in wage subsidies alone.

Unfortunately, these subsidies were not conditional on a return to work for laid-off employees, and many employees who thought they were only on temporary lay-off were terminated or had reduced on-call hours.

Hotels also reduced cleaning services to minimize worker-customer COVID-19 transmissions, but showed little concern for the health and safety of their workforce.

Hotels also reduced cleaning services to minimize worker-customer COVID-19 transmissions, but showed little concern for the health and safety of their workforce. Workers reported a lack of personal protective equipment supplies, inconsistent implementation of public health guidelines and unaddressed concerns regarding abuse by customers. Workers were forced to make the impossible choice between their safety and their livelihoods. BC's hotel sector began reporting revenue recovery

and increased profit margins as early as 2021, and by 2022 room revenues surpassed pre-pandemic levels to \$3.8 billion.

Hotel workers, however, have not fared so well. The hotel industry leveraged pandemic emergency measures into permanent cuts to labour costs, including increasing the proportion of low-wage workers they can hire through the Temporary Foreign Worker program to 30%, undercutting the position of all hotel workers.

In summer 2020, unionized hotel workers in BC—mostly women—went on strike to regain their employment. Women staged a hunger strike on the steps of the BC Legislature to urge the provincial government to intervene to protect the jobs of the 50,000 laid-off hotel workers, but the province declined to intervene, citing the primacy of securing recall rights through collective bargaining.

The very low and declining rate of unionization in the hotel industry—3.5% compared to 28.1% across all industries—and the prevalence of precarious employment meant that avenues to fight for a return to work were non-existent for most workers. In BC, there are still hotel workers on strike after over two-and-a-half years.

As governments plan for economic downturns, it is important that the voices of women hotel workers be at the centre of policy discussions since through their collective actions, hotel workers put a spotlight on an industry that treats racialized women as disposable.

BC’s women hotel workers have demonstrated they are

a determined workforce with a strong sense of collective responsibility for their colleagues. However, the federal and provincial governments need to do more to support their agency in the workplace by: safeguarding workers’ right to recall, proactively enforcing workplace rights and safety standards, introducing limits to on-call scheduling and increasing the minimum wage to a living wage.

These changes are essential for improving gender and racial equity in the workplace and for a more resilient hospitality and tourism sector.

This is an edited excerpt of a joint study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, UNITE HERE Local 40 and Simon Fraser University researchers. Read the full report, A Paradox in COVID-19 Recovery: Increased precarity of women hotel workers in British Columbia, here policyalternatives.ca/pandemic-recovery-paradox.



Alice Mūrage is a researcher with the Pacific Institute on Pathogens, Pandemics and Society (PIPPS) based at Simon Fraser University’s Faculty of Health Sciences.



Michelle Travis is the research director of UNITE HERE Local 40, a union representing workers throughout B.C., most of whom work in the accommodation and food services sector.



Véronique Sioufi is the CCPA-BC’s Racial & Socio-Economic Researcher.

TABLE 1: LABOUR CHARACTERISTICS COMPARISONS, CANADA, 2022

	All sectors	AFS sector	Accommodation services subsector	Traveller accommodation industry group
Women workers	47.6%	55.7%	57.4%	57.8%
Immigrant workers	26.7%	32.5%	31.9%	36.0%
Part-time workers	16.8%	47.4%	23.9%	24.9%
Young workers (15-24 years)	13.3%	44.3%	*	*
Older workers (55 years and over)	21.6%	11.9%	25.5%	24.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2023. Table 0922_01: Employed population by industry, North American Industry Classifications (NAICS) 2017, type of work, immigrant status and period of immigration, wages, presence of children and age of youngest child, age and sex, Canada, annual average, 2019 and 2022 (persons x 1,000 unless otherwise stated) [custom order] and Statistics Canada, 2023, Table 14-10-0023-01 - Labour force characteristics by industry, annual (x1000). *Data not accessed

Time for a new public transit investment plan

BY MARC LEE

Imagine being able to get from almost anywhere in BC to anywhere else on public transit, as one might in Europe or Asia. Or visitors landing at Vancouver airport and being able to get seamlessly around the province without the need to rent a car.

Whether it's dealing with bumper-to-bumper congestion in Metro Vancouver or being able to access a health care appointment in rural areas, BC needs to invest in a province-wide vision for zero-carbon transportation that thinks beyond personal automobiles as the preferred means of getting around.

Together with the BC Federation of Labour, we published a 10-year, \$22 billion public transit investment plan to significantly increase local transit services across the province and connect them into a more integrated whole. It would create some 16,800 jobs per year in construction and related jobs, and 23,700 jobs per year in operating transit by the end of the plan.

The plan aims to ensure that transit is affordable, accessible and inclusive—since many people cannot or prefer not to drive—while helping to meet BC's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. It's also an opportunity to eliminate privatization within an expanded public system, a measure that would allow for better wages and conditions for transit workers and foster improved worker retention and recruitment as we develop a more coherent public system.

A province-wide public transit network will improve mobility for people in small towns and rural areas, making it easier to get healthcare and other services, visit family or go on vacation.

The plan:

1. Connect BC communities everywhere through a new province-wide express bus service.

A province-wide public transit network will improve mobility for people in small towns and rural areas, making it easier to get healthcare and other services, visit family or go on vacation. And stronger transit connections across BC would have a big impact on tourism.

2. Double the number of buses in BC Transit local services within five years and triple it within ten.

This would ensure more frequent, reliable local transit services in communities throughout BC. Targeted, customized services including community shuttles, on-demand rides, car and bike sharing, can supplement fixed routes for “first/last mile” challenges.

3. Expand HandyDART service province-wide with an upgraded electric fleet.

This would mean an end to contracting with private companies for services and using taxis instead of buses.

4. Develop new regional rail connections across the South Coast and Vancouver Island along historic rail corridors.

This could be in partnership with First Nations communities along the rail lines.

5. Add new passenger ferry options between Vancouver, the Gulf Islands, Sunshine Coast and Vancouver Island.

Just as roads can't infinitely be expanded to accommodate more cars, BC's ferries have been hamstrung as almost exclusively car transportation.

6. Accelerate TransLink's 10-year Access for Everyone plan for Metro Vancouver.

Begin implementing next-level rapid transit options across the region.

7. Expand existing free transit programs to youth aged 13 to 18.

This will help young British Columbians develop the habit of using transit, a crucial cultural change in shifting transportation patterns. Free transit programs should also be expanded for people on social assistance not already included in the BC Bus Pass program.

8. Integrate all these transit pieces.

For a seamless, coordinated and coherent transit experience—with one-ticket access and synchronized service and



information infrastructure so that riders can make connections efficiently and reliably across systems.

Our investment plan includes boosting operating support to transit across the province from about \$350 million currently to \$1.5 billion per year at the end of our ten-year plan.

In many ways, we are already spending this money but in ways that contribute to congestion and GHG emissions. The BC government spends more than \$4 billion per year on transportation capital spending (including roads and transit) alone.

In the 2024 BC Budget, transportation capital expenditures amount to about \$13.5 billion over the next three years. Of this, \$4.1 billion is for transit but mostly for Skytrain expansion in Metro Vancouver.

Investments in high-quality public transit will induce new demand enabling residents to go car-free or at least own fewer vehicles, saving between \$6,000 and \$10,000 per vehicle annually in costs.

While transit cannot replace the advantage cars have for

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some trips, it is possible—with improved service—to make transit a viable option for most people most of the time. To facilitate a major shift in trips to transit, the public transit experience must be convenient, reliable and affordable relative to a trip by car.

A full transformation of public transit province-wide within a decade will lead to greater access to education, healthcare and employment, stronger public sector jobs, lower carbon emissions and healthier British Columbians. So let's get moving!



Marc Lee is a senior economist at the CCPA-BC.



International students are subsidizing post-secondary education

BY VÉRONIQUE SIOUFI

International students are being blamed for the provincial government's failure to keep up with the demand on housing and public services, while at the same time, these students lack access to decent housing and social supports.

BC is increasingly dependent on international students to fill critical labour shortages and subsidize the costs of public services through low wages and high tuition. Meanwhile, the government offers no new investments in the budget to support and protect them. This is both unjust and counter to the provincial government's racial equity goals.

In January 2024, the federal government announced a cap on international student visas that would see a potential 35% reduction in new international students for BC's post-secondary institutions. This raised questions about the impact such a cap would have on public post-secondary education (PSE) in BC because of university and colleges' growing reliance

on exorbitant international student tuition fees to make up for chronically insufficient public funding.

International students make up nearly a third of the province's PSE student body, or approximately 175,000 of 545,000 students.

The provincial government recently promised measures to prevent private institutions from preying on international students, yet even for the 82,000 international students at public institutions, fees are extremely high. International student tuition for undergraduate programs are on average 5.5 times the cost of domestic tuition at public institutions in the province, with an average annual fee of \$35,266 for international students compared to \$6,283 for domestic students.

BC Budget 2024 maintains public post-secondary institutions' exploitative reliance on international students. While the PSE budget includes a \$500 million increase for capital spending and an \$845 million increase for operational costs over the next three years, this funding expands physical capacity and maintains service delivery to keep up with a growing student body. This is not enough to provide PSE the funding they need to reduce their reliance on international student fees and to relieve international students of the financial burden placed on them. As a share of public universities' total revenues, government funding decreased by 8% from 2010 to 2020 while student fees increased by more than 12% in the same decade.

Post-secondary student associations and faculty associations have emphasized the need for an updated funding model that addresses PSE reliance on unreasonable international student tuition rates.

Post-secondary student associations and faculty associations have emphasized the need for an updated funding model that addresses PSE reliance on unreasonable international student tuition rates, increasing funding to offset tuition fee reductions and extending the 2% cap on domestic tuition increases to include international tuition.

The federal cap on student visas was touted as a means to address the housing crisis and instead of challenging the narrative that international students are to blame for housing shortages, Premier David Eby requested the federal government reconsider its cap because of the impact it will have on sectors with labour shortages, such as early childhood education, nursing and construction.

This approach to the international student program marks a concerning shift from a knowledge exchange initiative to a labour market supplement, exploiting international students in

a manner akin to the temporary foreign workers program. This model is extractive on two fronts: through undervalued labour and high tuition fees. This benefits the province economically without offering adequate support to the students it draws in. With international students arriving predominantly from countries such as India and China, these policies only aggravate the existing social inequalities these students face as racialized people in Canada.

International student tuition for undergraduate programs are on average 5.5 times the cost of domestic tuition at public institutions in the province, with an average annual fee of \$35,266 for international students compared to \$6,283 for domestic students.

Government funding to improve wages and working conditions in public services for critical roles such as early childhood educators would not only help to fill labour shortages by making careers in these fields more tenable, but would also prevent international students from being leveraged as a means to suppress wage growth in these fields. Ensuring fair compensation for all workers, regardless of their status, is crucial for maintaining the integrity and quality of these vital social services. It would also help dismantle the undervaluing of care work on the one hand, and racialized labour on the other.

If there are genuine labour shortages, the government needs to increase funding for the needed education and training to meet current and future labour market demands. The \$480 million Future Ready action plan announced in 2023 provides grants of up to \$3,500 for post-secondary job training programs, but there remains a large gap between the value of these grants and the costs of training. Initiatives to fully fund tuition for in-demand job programs, with a clear path to permanent residency for international students so we can keep these skills in BC, are needed.

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills has promised to bring transparency to international student tuition fees, which is a step in the right direction. But it is long past time to revive the PSE funding review—which has been stalled for two years—to ensure that international students are protected from exploitation and fairly compensated for the cultural and economic benefits they bring to BC.



Véronique Sioufi is the CCPA-BC's Racial & Socio-Economic Researcher.

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Getting to Net-Zero in Canada

BY DAVID HUGHES

The urgency of mitigating climate change through significant emission reductions is globally recognized—most recently with the call to transition away from fossil fuels at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP28). Canada has long accepted this challenge: its latest pledge is to reduce emissions to 40–45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net-zero by 2050.

While it is easy to make long-range political promises, it is much harder to have a realistic plan to achieve these important goals.

In June 2023, the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) published “Canada’s Energy Future 2023,” offering—for the first time—energy supply scenarios that align with Canada’s 2050 net-zero target. These scenarios call for major changes in Canada’s energy supply, including reducing oil and gas production, a several-fold increase in renewable generation from solar, wind and biomass, a near tripling of nuclear capacity and a many-fold increase in technologies such as carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS).

This report reviews the evolution and scale of the emissions problem during the fossil fuel era and the current energy supply picture in Canada; examines the CER net-zero energy supply projections as well as their assumptions and policy implications; and makes recommendations for Canada to increase the chances of meeting its net-zero commitments.

Canada’s heavy reliance on fossil fuels for domestic energy supply and export revenue only deepens this challenge. In 2022, these fuels met 77.4% of the nation’s end-use energy demand

and the country exported 63% of its oil, 34% of its gas and 67% of its coal. The energy sector was responsible for 8.9% of Canada’s overall GDP.

Canadians consume nearly five times the global average of energy per capita and emit three times the global average of emissions. While over 80% of Canada’s electricity supply is emissions-free, originating from hydro, nuclear, wind and solar, it represented only 17.6% of end-use energy demand in 2022.

The CER scenarios are based on an economic analysis of current and announced government policies, technical factors and the most comprehensive knowledge base of Canadian energy data available, and are an important starting point for understanding what a transition to net-zero emissions might require.

Although some of the assumptions made by CER on price trends and technology deployment are extremely optimistic and therefore unlikely to be realized, they provide a useful foundation for understanding the true scale of needed policies and changes for Canada to achieve net-zero.

Key conclusions and recommendations include:

- **Major policy improvements are required to achieve net zero by 2050.**
- **Over-reliance on industrial carbon removal introduces high risk:** CER's projections of a 34-39-fold increase in CCUS and a several thousand-fold expansion of direct air capture (DAC) introduce very high risk given the cost and slow rate of deployment of CCUS and the very high cost and early stage of development of DAC.
- **Over-reliance on hydrogen introduces high risk:** CER's projection that hydrogen can grow from almost nothing to 11-12% of end-use energy supply by 2050 is extremely optimistic. Although some hydrogen will be needed, a more realistic goal may be the more conservative 5% estimate of the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- **Increased electricity generation will be needed to lower risk:** To reduce risk from over-reliance on fossil fuels, CCUS, DAC and hydrogen, electricity generation will need to increase from the 39-41% of end-use energy supply in the CER net-zero scenarios. Increasing electricity's share of energy supply to 55%—as assumed in the IEA's net-zero roadmap—would be a more realistic target.
- **Major improvements in forest management practices are required:** Existing forest management practices have seen

Canada's forests become major net emitters. Tripling the sequestration capacity of Canada's forests, as assumed in CER's net-zero scenarios, will require major improvements in forest management practices.

- **Reducing energy demand must become a major priority:** Reducing energy consumption is the low-hanging fruit, as it eliminates the cost of new energy production and emissions reduction infrastructure. Prioritizing conservation, efficiency and behavioral change must become a major government policy priority.

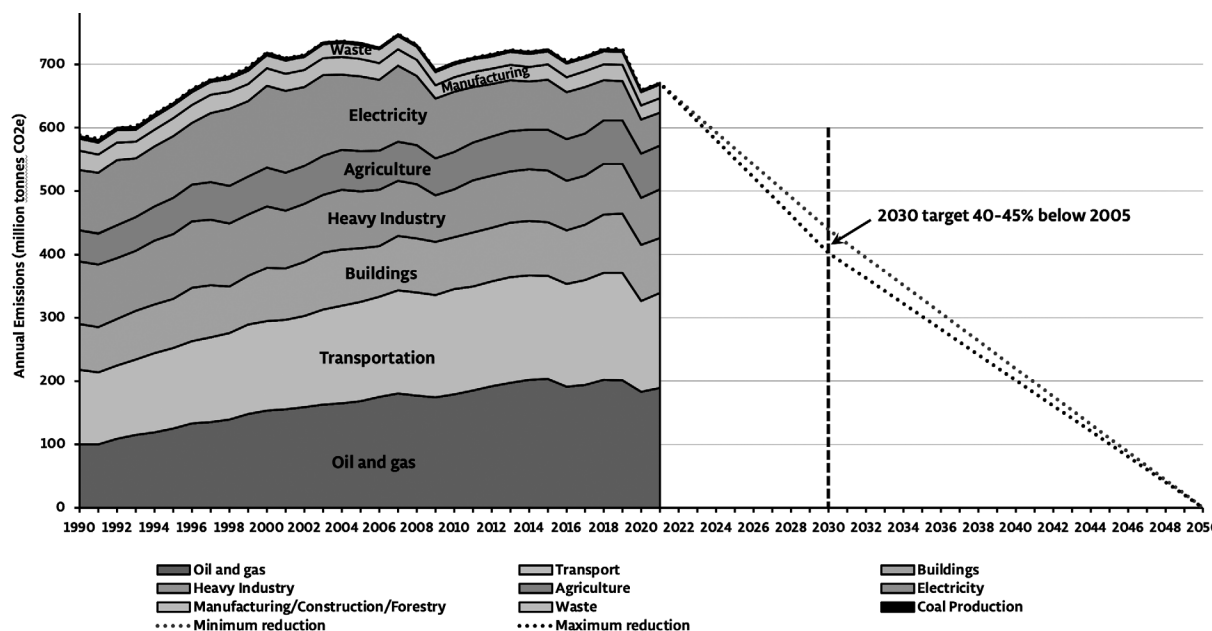
Despite the formidable challenges ahead, Canada's path to net-zero is achievable with a clear, actionable plan that recognizes the scale of the undertaking and the limitations of potential solutions. This report underscores the need for a comprehensive strategy with practical, scalable solutions and a robust policy framework that will steer Canada toward a sustainable, net-zero future by 2050.

This article is a summary of David Hughes' report, Getting to Net-Zero in Canada: Scale of the problem, government projections and daunting challenges, available at: policyalternatives.ca/netzero.



David Hughes is an Earth Scientist and a CCPA-BC's research associate.

CANADA'S EMISSIONS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR THROUGH 2021 AND ITS EMISSIONS REDUCTION COMMITMENTS THROUGH 2050.



Note: Emissions from land use, land use change and forestry are not included in Canada's official *National Inventory Report*.

Why BC needs sectoral bargaining now

BY IGLIKA IVANOVA AND VÉRONIQUE SIOUFI

Too many BC workers lack meaningful access to the benefits of collective bargaining and the failure of our labour laws to keep up with the evolving nature of work is a key culprit.



The result is growing income inequality, widespread gender and racial pay gaps and entire sectors (like hospitality or janitorial services) stuck in a race to the bottom that drives down wages and living standards for everyone.

To reverse these disturbing trends and shift to a healthier, more equitable economy, BC urgently needs to enable broader-based—or sectoral—bargaining models in the private sector. This is what we told the independent review panel tasked with recommending changes to BC’s labour laws.

Sectoral bargaining represents a different approach to labour law than the worksite-based certification model prevalent in BC. Instead of channeling all organizing and bargaining efforts at the individual workplace, sectoral bargaining provides ways to bring together workers across an industry or occupation within a designated region to negotiate minimum standards for the entire sector.

In BC, sectoral bargaining is common in the broader public sector, but rare in the private sector outside movie and television production and construction. BC’s private sector relies on worksite-based certification, which came out of the early 20th century industrial context dominated by large domestic firms that offered long-term employment to relatively homogenous groups of workers. However, this model is poorly suited to today’s vastly different economic realities.

In industries characterized by small individual worksites and powerful—often multinational—employers that hide behind layers of franchising and subcontracting, the current model of

worksite-based certification leaves many vulnerable workers without a realistic path to collective bargaining.

Today, only 15% of BC’s private sector workers are covered by a collective agreement. Union coverage is even lower among women in the private sector (a paltry 11%). In the accommodation and food services sector, where women, racialized workers, immigrants and temporary foreign workers are overrepresented, only 4% of workers are covered by a collective agreement. Lower levels of unionization have diminished earnings and bargaining power for hundreds of thousands of middle- and lower-income workers, consequently increasing the share of the pie going to corporate management and shareholders.

Sectoral bargaining would change this.

Sectoral bargaining is widespread internationally and some form of it exists in much of Europe, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and elsewhere.

There is good reason for this: compelling evidence shows that sectoral bargaining benefits not only workers but also the economy. Countries with sectoral bargaining have higher collective agreement coverage rates and consequently enjoy better labour standards (including for vulnerable workers), higher levels of employment, lower income inequality and smaller gender and racial pay gaps. Further, setting industry-level standards can boost productivity by essentially eliminating the incentive to compete on who can drive wages and working conditions down further and encourage competition on who can produce a better product and better manage their operations instead.

It’s time to expand BC’s labour laws to enable sectoral bargaining and make a real difference in the working lives of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable workers.



Iglika Ivanova is a senior economist, the CCPA-BC’s Public Interest Researcher and Co-Director of the Understanding Precarity in BC Project.



Véronique Sioufi is the CCPA-BC’s Racial & Socio-Economic Equity Researcher.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

A conversation with Danielle Dionne

I am a white settler living gratefully on the land of the Kwantlen Peoples in Surrey, British Columbia. My paternal ancestors emigrated from France and settled in the territory of the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Takuhikan Peoples in northern Quebec. My maternal ancestors came from Scotland and England to the Red River valley in Manitoba, home of the Metis Nation, and Anishinaabek, Ininiwak and Dakota Peoples. I grew up on the stolen land of the Katzie Nation in Maple Ridge, British Columbia.

My passions are parenting, justice, conflict resolution, reconciliation and violence prevention.

Rav: How did you first learn about the CCPA-BC?

Danielle: I came across the CCPA-BC on 'X', through a post about poverty. Then, my union, the Health Sciences Association, offered me a ticket to your annual gala. I jumped at the chance to attend.

Rav: When you think of the CCPA-BC what comes to mind?

Danielle: Community. Research. Activism.

Rav: What social justice issues are you passionate about? Why?

Danielle: I began working with young people and parents in the community, particularly at K-12 schools in Burnaby, where there was a large population of refugees. I witnessed how our family policing system was (and still is) biased towards white Western views of parenting. Indigenous and new families to Canada are left without support, many losing kids to the Ministry of Children and Family Development for alleged parenting 'deficiencies'. These families experienced devastating stress from generations of violence, systemic marginalization and exploitation. This experience ignited my passion for peace and parenting. Fast forward 15 years, I work as a parenting practitioner with the Canadian Mental Health Association and am an activist for Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #6.

I am passionate about child rights and well-being, reconciliation and parenting approaches. I believe: "peace and patience are possible when parents practice problem-solving procedures."

Rav: You attended your first CCPA-BC gala last November. What did that night mean to you?

Danielle: The gala was fantastic. It was meaningful to be surrounded by action-takers. I sensed an air of hope and belonging. Sundance Chief Rueben George's talk really resonated with me. His call to fight for justice, keep showing up and speaking up—no matter what. I needed that powerful message that night. I also was fan-girling sitting so close to David Suzuki. It was an inspiring night indeed!

Rav: At the gala you signed up to become a new monthly donor. What inspired you to do so?

Danielle: The energy that night was something I hope to feel more of. I sensed camaraderie, activism and a responsibility to each other, Mother Earth and equity for all. I was moved by the possibility of applying research to the knowledge in the room and imagined how this could foster community building and improve young people's futures.

Rav: What would you say to encourage others to donate to the CCPA-BC?

Danielle: Put your money toward a kind future, one that is centered in sustainability, truth and compassion!



Rav Kambo is the CCPA-BC's Senior Fundraising Coordinator.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to everyone who gives to the BC Solutions Fund. When you donate to the BC Solutions fund 100% of your support goes to the CCPA-BC office.

We also thank the many, many people who donate smaller—but equally valuable—amounts and those in BC who support the CCPA through general donations. We are truly grateful for your support!

We strive to ensure that each name in our donor recognition is appropriately listed and spelled. Please contact Rav Kambo by phone at 604-801-5121 x 225 or rav@policyalternatives.ca if we have made an error so we may correctly recognize you in the future.



CCPA–BC Annual Fundraising Gala with Dr. Vandana Shiva

We are very pleased to announce that Dr. Vandana Shiva, a visionary in the environmental movement, will be the keynote speaker at our 2024 CCPA–BC Annual Fundraising Gala.

For over four decades, Vandana Shiva has fiercely advocated for diversity, Indigenous knowledge, localization and Earth democracy; she has been at the forefront of global movement-building, seed saving, food sovereignty and connecting the dots between the destruction of nature, the polarization of societies and indiscriminate corporate greed.

Drawing on a lifetime of activism and insight, as detailed in her 2022 memoir, *Terra Viva: My Life in a Biodiversity of Movements*, Dr. Shiva will share her unique perspective on building a future that respects our planet and each other.

This gala offers not just an opportunity to engage with a pivotal figure in environmental advocacy but also a chance to actively support the CCPA–BC's commitment to policy work that uplifts people and the planet.

Save the date!

WHEN: Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 5:30 pm

LOCATION: Fraserview Hall, 8240 Fraser Street, Vancouver

Tickets for our annual gala will go on sale this summer. To stay up-to-date make sure you've subscribed to our mailing list. You can sign up at www.ccpabc.ca/subscribe.

For organizations: To become a patron or organizational sponsor please contact us at 604-801-5121 ext. 231

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