



Fast

FACTS

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES - MANITOBA

March 15, 2021

Manitoba Needs a Real Climate Plan



Previously published in the Winnipeg Free Press, March 12, 2021

The recent Winnipeg Free Press article, “Seeking balance on Manitoba’s climate file” (Mar 1), clearly illuminates the lack of urgency and action that the climate crisis has been given in this province. Greta Thunberg said it clearly: “Our house is on fire.” Not only are we not panicking, we are willfully blind to the flames and the fire department has not been notified. Meanwhile, the flames continue to grow.

In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the *1.5° C Report*. This profoundly important report clearly shows the scale of the problem and the required timetable for action: we need to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 if we hope to avoid the worst consequences of climate change

and to leave a livable climate for the generations that follow us. By not taking action at the necessary scale and with the targets consistent with this objective is a denial of that duty.

The Manitoba government’s Climate and Green Plan was released in October of 2017. It contains much laudable language and it does have some good ideas. However, it is not a plan: It does not set any meaningful targets, there’s no timetable, and regrettably, no intention to meet the IPCC 1.5° C objectives.

This is why Manitoba’s Climate Action Team has deemed it necessary to work with local subject matter experts and concerned citizens to publish Manitoba’s *Road to Resilience: A Community Climate Action Pathway to a Fossil Fuel Free Future*.

there is an alternative.

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(<http://road2resilience.ca>) The objective of this document is to provide a pathway to full decarbonization in Manitoba - zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

As we build that pathway we will be building our local resilience. Resilience means providing for our essential needs ourselves without fossil fuel.

The Road to Resilience (R2R) brings forward key ideas that all need to be considered, discussed, researched, and implemented immediately:

Food - We need to feed ourselves locally without fossil fuel fertilizers or using diesel for machinery. We need to look at soil health and nutrients differently. "Organic waste" needs to be treated as valuable organic input. We need to develop alternatives to anhydrous ammonia fertilizer production via natural gas. We need to be adding carbon to our soils year upon year. Livestock needs to become part of the soil carbon cycle again. Tractors can run on biodiesel made by producer cooperatives from a portion of their own production.

Buildings - We need to heat all of our buildings, old and new, affordably without natural gas. First of all, we need to stop making the problem worse; we need to stop expanding the natural gas distribution system. We need stronger building codes to ensure that new buildings are much more energy efficient. And we need deep energy retrofits for most of our existing buildings. We need to develop energy balanced, utility-run district heating systems that incorporate geothermal energy. We need to incorporate building energy labelling to make it visible in the market. Biomass can be used as a heating fuel in some, appropriate locations (e.g. wood for remote boreal communities, agricultural waste for rural areas)

Transportation - We need to move all goods and people without gasoline or diesel. We can reduce the need to travel by providing high-speed internet to more of the province. We can encourage more active transportation. We need to plan and prepare for the inevitability of all vehicles becoming electric. We need airships to

provide transport options for communities currently dependent upon disappearing winter roads.

Energy and Electricity - We need to develop and use our electricity resources effectively, efficiently, and affordably to meet those previous three objectives. We can't just "switch fuels" from fossil to hydro. We need more electrical generation - Even with the new Keeyask dam, we don't have nearly enough to heat all of our buildings and charge all our vehicles if they were suddenly switched to electric. The critical step is to maximize building energy efficiency. We need to increase electrical production and we need to plan and develop strategies for massive amounts of industrial and domestic energy storage. Efficiency Manitoba needs to be refocused on GHG reduction and receive carbon tax revenue to do it.

We call the Road to Resilience a pathway, not a plan. The next step is to work together to develop a plan. The Climate Action Team intends to continue to engage with other concerned citizens, indigenous leaders, and organizations to further develop and enhance the R2R until it truly becomes a plan - with budgets, time lines, and resources. We invite the Manitoba government to work with us in formulating that plan. In fact, we can't do it without their earnest and committed involvement.

However, the first step toward putting out a fire is to realize and accept that there is a fire.

Curt Hull, Project Director, Climate Change Connection / Climate Action Team member. CCPA MB is a member of the climate action team.