



BC SOLUTIONS

News & Commentary from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC Office | JANUARY 2017



In these times Reflection, struggle, celebration

A MESSAGE FROM THE CCPA-BC OFFICE STAFF

Happy New Year, and welcome to the inaugural edition of *BC Solutions*. Inside, you'll find timely analysis that highlights the CCPA-BC's latest work (with so much more available online), along with news and updates. This new magazine replaces our former publications, *BC Update* and *BC Commentary*.

2017 marks the CCPA-BC's 20th anniversary. In certain respects, it feels like a strange time to be celebrating — having just closed out 2016 with the election of Donald Trump in the United States, and the approval here at home of Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion.

These are challenging times indeed. But an important part of the CCPA's role is to help make sense of this shifting terrain of politics, culture and power in which ideas and stories about our society are defined.

You can see this role reflected in CCPA-BC Director Seth Klein's essay *Lessons from the Trump election for progressives in Canada* (page 4), as well as in the article by Seth and Associate Director Shannon Daub on what they call "the new climate denialism" — that frustrating fiction that Canada →

IN THIS ISSUE ↘

- 02 Welcome to our new look
- 03 Why the provincial government should stop bragging about K-12 education funding
- 04 Lessons from the Trump election
- 06 Four planks for a bold and progressive BC jobs agenda
- 08 Fracking has no place near critical dams or reservoirs
- 09 Our 2016 Rosenbluth Lecture
- 10 The new climate denialism
- 12 Building a community of progressive visionaries



CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
BC Office

can be a climate leader and ramp up oil and gas production at the same time (page 10).

Our role at the CCPA is also to show what's possible when we put our best values into action — to provide leadership in defining an alternative policy vision. And on that front, we do find cause to celebrate.

In November, we were delighted to host economist Pierre Fortin for our annual Rosenbluth Lecture. Professor Fortin's research into the substantial economic benefits of Quebec's universal child care

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system gave a major boost to the call for a \$10-a-day program here in BC. Senior Economist Igluka Ivanova used Pierre's research as the basis for her study (published in 2015) showing that a \$10-a-day plan would largely pay for itself. That's because of the additional tax revenues governments gain when thousands more women are able to return to work after having children.

Thanks to years of advocacy by child care advocates (bolstered by research from economists like Pierre and Igluka), we're seeing the call for a \$10-a-day plan gain traction with the public — and with the BC NDP, who've made it a central plank in their 2017 election campaign. (You can find out more about the event with Pierre Fortin on page 9.)

We also find hope in another key area of our work — training the next generation of leaders. We've been proud to co-host Next Up, a leadership program for young people committed to social,

economic and environmental justice, now marking its 10th anniversary. We continue to create paid internships for university students, who are mentored by our research and communications staff. And we recognize key contributions by young researchers and activists through the Power of Youth Leadership Awards (if there's someone you'd like to nominate for the 2017 awards, see page 5 for details).

2017 promises to be a busy year. Heading towards the provincial election in May, you'll see us deep in the fray, making it clear there is no shortage of concrete ideas for a more just and sustainable province. Case in point — take a look at Seth Klein's overview of four planks for a bold and progressive BC jobs agenda on page 6. We'll be pushing all the major political parties to adopt creative, ambitious policies like these.

We'll also continue to assess the current government's track record. Like Public Finance Analyst Alex Hemingway's assessment of the rhetoric and reality in K-12 education funding (see Alex's article on page 3). Likewise, Resource Policy Analyst Ben Parfitt's investigation into the risks of fracking-induced earthquakes for BC's dams, and the provincial government's failure to adequately protect public safety (see page 8). Both these reports generated a storm of media coverage and forced the provincial ministers responsible to respond.

All this work is possible because of people like you: supporters who share our progressive values.

As we kick off our 20th anniversary celebrations, we know there is still much work to be done. And we're ready.

Onwards,
The CCPA-BC Staff

Welcome to our new look

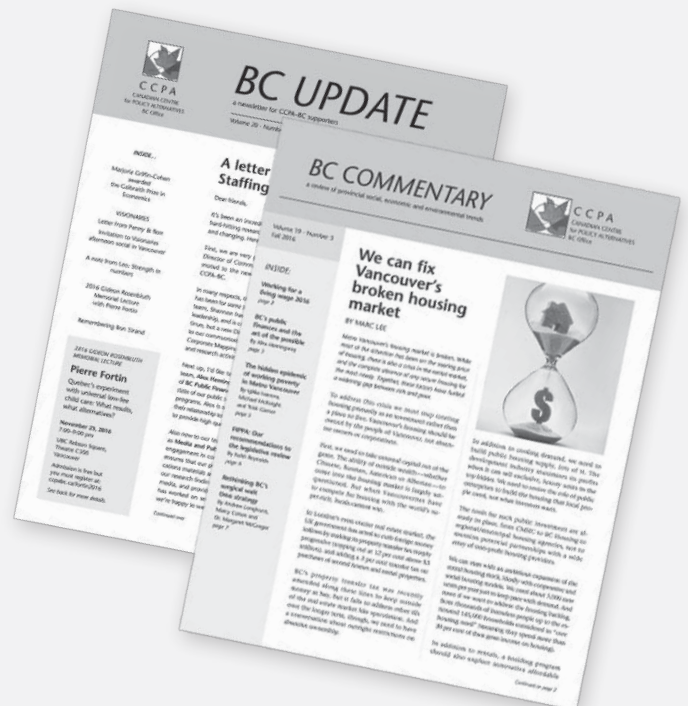
Looking for BC Update and BC Commentary? Look no further. We've combined the two to create the magazine you're reading, BC Solutions.

Now with all CCPA-BC news and analysis in one place, this redesign offers up articles in a more readable and engaging format.

Through this new publication, we're pleased to be better able to keep you up-to-date on research, events and other goings-on at the CCPA-BC Office.

Huge thanks go to the amazing Paula Grasdal who designed the magazine and to our Visual Communications Specialist, Terra Poirier, who oversaw the process from start to finish.

Read on to see what's new! And if you have any comments or questions, please feel free to get in touch with us by emailing info@ccpabc.ca.



Why the provincial government should stop bragging about K-12 education funding

BY ALEX HEMINGWAY

It's no secret that BC's public education system is stretched to the breaking point. Yet our Premier and Minister of Education like to brag that provincial education funding is at "record levels", pointing the finger at local school boards as the culprits for cutbacks. But the government's claims simply don't add up.

At least half of the province's school districts faced budget crises this spring, forced to make impossible trade-offs between shutting schools and axing vital programs and supports. These crises are the direct result of chronic underfunding by the provincial government, not a failure on the part of individual school boards.

Public funding for elementary and high school education in BC fell by 25% as a share of the province's economic pie between 2001 and 2016 — from 3.3% of GDP to a projected 2.5% in 2016. BC has the second-lowest level of public education funding in the country — nearly \$1,000 per student below the national average.

The provincial government has also fobbed off a whole array of rising costs to local school districts.

When costs are increased without enough compensating dollars flowing into our schools, the system is left under enormous pressure.

According to an estimate released under Freedom of Information legislation, cost pressures on school districts amounted to a province-wide total of \$192 million over the 2012-13 to 2014-15 school years.

But the government has used all sorts of sleight-of-hand to obscure this fact.

Sometimes it points to a decline in overall school enrolment in BC. But the funding crunch has hit school districts with growing enrolment as well as those seeing declines. And the government's own data show that declining enrolment is largely a temporary issue, with an increase in enrolment of almost 40,000 students projected by 2024.

The government also talks about the target of having schools 95% full, but many don't realize that in their calculation, dedicated art, computer and music rooms are often considered "empty."

Back in the spring, the government announced \$25 million in funding as a "reinvestment of administrative savings." But the devil is in the details: the government had previously mandated \$54 million in administrative cuts over two years, and the announcement simply scaled back part of the original cut. There was no new money there at all.

A strong public education system is not just "nice to have" — it's an essential, long-term investment that pays big social and economic dividends.

There's no question BC can afford to reinvest in public education. For 2016-17, the provincial government is now forecasting a \$2.2 billion surplus. It also sent over \$310 million in public tax dollars to fund private schools — a practice opposed by three quarters of British Columbians according to recent polling.

In fact, if we dedicated the same share of our economy to public education today as we did 15 years ago, we'd have nearly another \$2 billion at hand. That much additional funding might go beyond what's necessary, but it tells us what's in the realm of the possible.

The economic returns to education spending are also enormous and widely recognized. A strong public education system is not just "nice to have" — it's an essential, long-term investment that pays big social and economic dividends.

We also know from education research that investment in smaller class sizes, for example, substantially improves outcomes for students overall — and helps disadvantaged students the most. In an era of growing inequality, education is one of the great remaining equalizers.

The truth is that we could invest substantially more in public education in BC, but we — or rather our government leaders — choose not to. And it's a choice that will cost us all.

Alex Hemingway is the Public Finance Policy Analyst at the CCPA-BC.

About this project

What's the real story behind BC's education funding crisis? was one of the CCPA-BC's most-read papers this year. It received a huge amount of news coverage (including a supportive Vancouver Sun editorial), was shared widely on social media, and yielded positive feedback through letters to the editor, and emails and calls to the CCPA-BC Office. The government was put on the defensive — but the BC Education Minister's attempts to challenge the analysis were unconvincing and quickly debunked (for details, see policynote.ca/swing-and-miss).



Lessons from the Trump election for progressives in Canada

BY SETH KLEIN

It's been a couple of months since we were jolted by the profoundly disturbing reality of a Donald Trump US presidency. We've all found ourselves in many discussions about how such an abhorrent and blatantly racist and misogynist candidate could have won the most powerful political office in the world, and about how to respond.

There is no shortage of insightful analysis out there now about how this happened. The toxic interplay between (largely) white working-class alienation and America's deep-seated racism brought the politics of hate to centre stage. Of course, as many have noted, for countless people of colour, who live with the reality of racial inequality and violence, this came as less of a surprise. But surprise or not, the election saw white supremacist ideas and behaviour burst more fully into the open, given license by Trump's proudly hateful campaign.

There has been much debate about whether Trump fits the definition of a fascist. My view is that he falls somewhere on the neo-fascist spectrum. He shows either ignorance or contempt for core provisions of the US Constitution. His rhetoric appeals to violence and scapegoating. And his early actions as president-elect suggest he has every intention of turning his ugly rhetoric into policy.

But what does Trump's election mean for Canada? In particular, how can progressives in Canada prepare and respond?

An ill-advised reaction is a smug claim that "it couldn't happen here."

We in Canada are not immune. To claim we are is to deny the

deep racial inequities in our own society, particularly for Indigenous people. It is to pretend that the election of Rob Ford as mayor of Canada's largest city didn't push many of the same buttons for white people, and white men especially, as Trump is now pushing in the US. It is to ignore that we face many of the same urban-rural divides. It is to forget that a major federal political party in the 2015 election employed racist dog-whistle calls with their "barbaric cultural practices" tip line and politically targeted women who wear the niqab (no doubt because some opinion polling told them this could be a winner).

So a first lesson is for white progressives, specifically. We need to step up and work harder alongside and in support of Indigenous, queer, and racialized allies against rising xenophobia, racism, sexism, and anti-immigrant politics and assaults. That begins with heightened alert, with raising awareness of these issues among our white peers and neighbours — and it also means creating more alliances with those directly affected, bringing a stronger intersectional lens, and diversifying organizations and movements.

Does that mean abandoning a focus on class? Of course not. Canada, like the US, has seen the hollowing-out of working-class

manufacturing jobs and the rise of precarious employment. And recent immigrants, women, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups bear the brunt of economic insecurity in Canada.

So could it happen here? Yes, it damn well could. It could happen anywhere that masses of working-class people are treated as economically expendable, and where racist and anti-immigrant views lie just below the surface, waiting to be activated by unscrupulous political demagogues eager to exploit them.

Are most white working- and middle-class people in Canada on the cusp of voting for a proto-fascist like Trump? No, not most. Nor did most working- and middle-class Americans. But elections are won and lost by relatively small shifts on the margins.

Trump's election victory should be a wake-up call to rethink all those neoliberal policies giving rise to economic insecurity and job precarity. Surely a fundamental lesson for our current government is to walk away from new trade and investment deals that bestow yet more rights and mobility to corporations.

Trump's election victory should be a wake-up call to rethink all those neoliberal policies giving rise to economic insecurity and job precarity.

And what of climate change? For a Trudeau government that claims to take climate action seriously, now comes its greatest test. Will we expand oil exports to a country that is walking away from its global climate treaty commitments? Will we invest in new fossil fuel infrastructure when our neighbours seem hell-bent on blowing through what remains of their small share of a global carbon budget? This moment calls for a climate leadership reset — this new terrain demands that we re-double our efforts.

The election does reinforce one important warning when it comes to climate action: as with the trade deals, if governmental climate actions consign many working-class people to the scrapheap — if their economic security is seen to be expendable by “elites” making the decisions — then climate action risks producing the same backlash we've just witnessed.

And so, as we redouble our climate action efforts, we must also redouble our commitment to climate justice. We need comprehensive just transition policies for workers in the fossil fuel sector (ensuring they receive training and income support as they shift to new clean energy industries), and we need a government-led program that will produce thousands of new jobs in green infrastructure and the low-carbon economy.

We've been at the crossroads before; a choice between fascism, the suppression of core rights, and the devastation of societies, on the one hand, versus joining together across race and class to make common cause in an existential fight. One path leads to division and ugliness. The other to hope.

I still believe there is a progressive majority in Canada, even if it too often operates in silos. The Trump victory calls on all of us to animate and mobilize our best selves.

Let's celebrate BC's young progressive leaders



The Power of Youth Leadership Awards recognize young (under 32 years old) progressive leaders in BC who are driving change towards a more socially, economically and environmentally just society. Each year, the CCPA-BC presents two Power of Youth awards: one for social movement building, and one for research and analysis.

Winners receive their award at our annual Gala, and out-of-town recipients are brought to Vancouver. Receiving these awards means they also have opportunities to share their work more broadly with members of the progressive community.

If you or someone you know would make a good candidate, visit policyalternatives.ca/power-of-youth to learn more. Nominees must send in a statement about how they meet the criteria for their award category, and must have a short statement from a co-nominator (a peer, mentor, community member, or anyone else who knows their work).

Help us spread the word about this great opportunity for young leaders in BC!

Gala update

As we plan for our 20th Anniversary celebrations, we've decided to change things up a bit – so this year our annual fundraising gala will take place in the fall rather than its usual time in the spring.

Stay tuned for details or bookmark: policyalternatives.ca/bcgala2017

Four planks for a bold and progressive BC jobs agenda

BY SETH KLEIN

It seems the provincial government never misses an opportunity to boast about the strength of BC's economy and employment. No matter the question, "jobs and the economy" are the answer. But in truth, the government's own Budget forecasts weak economic growth over the next few years (better than other provinces, but low by historic standards).

And the jobs picture is not much brighter. For six years after the major recession in 2008/09, the employment rate in BC flat-lined. Things finally picked up over the last year, but the working-age employment rate is still below pre-recession levels.

And this says nothing about the quality of the jobs that have been created — or where they're located.

Virtually all the recent job growth has been in the Lower Mainland, and to a lesser extent Southern Vancouver Island. In contrast, there has been no job growth this year in the regions that were specifically promised jobs courtesy of the LNG pipe dream.

But here's the good news: there is no shortage of practical ideas for building a robust jobs plan with good jobs that reach every community in the province. And we can tackle some of our most pressing social and environmental challenges while we're at it. What follows is an ambitious four-point plan to do just that.

PLANK 1: A BOLD CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The focus here should be on green infrastructure investments that would result in thousands of new jobs across the province, including:

- A major buildings retrofit program (where public, commercial and residential buildings and homes are renovated to maximize energy efficiency and conservation);
- New investments in renewable electricity generation (solar, wind, tidal and geothermal energy), and renewable neighbourhood energy utilities;
- Large-scale investments in public transit and high-speed rail; and
- Climate adaptation infrastructure (such as sewer and dike upgrades).

How to pay for these investments? To a large extent, they are capital expenditures that should be financed like traditional infrastructure projects through borrowing and repayment over the life of the project.

But a good chunk of the money should come from annual increases in BC's carbon tax. As CCPA economist Marc Lee has shown, we could use half the revenues from an escalating carbon tax for such investments, while directing the other half towards a re-structured credit for low- and middle-income households.

The net impact would be to make the bottom half of BC households better off — getting more from the credit than they pay in the carbon tax.

4 ways to create GOOD JOBS ACROSS BC

- 1 Invest in an ambitious climate action plan**
Thousands of jobs in renewable energy, building retrofits and public transit in urban and rural communities
- 2 Revitalize forestry**
20,000+ jobs per year in reforestation, value-added manufacturing, and processing diverted wood waste and raw logs
- 3 Build affordable housing**
10,000 new social & co-op housing units per year
16,000 direct jobs annually
- 4 \$10 a day child care**
8,000 net new child care jobs and
40,000 women back in paid work force

Good jobs. Every region of BC. Every part of the economy. Here's how: policynote.ca/goodjobsbc @CCPA_BC

PLANK 2: REVIVE THE FORESTRY SECTOR

Employment in BC's long-neglected forestry sector has been in decline since the late 1990s, but took a sharp fall in 2007.

We have literally been going down the value-chain, exporting more and more raw logs while capturing less and less of the value (and jobs) from this publicly-owned resource. All the while collecting minimal stumpage fees. As the CCPA's Ben Parfitt recently reported, last year BC exported close to seven million cubic metres of raw logs — enough wood to frame 165,000 homes or roughly half of Vancouver's detached housing stock.

This is nuts.

Forestry — a renewable non-fossil fuel resource — should have a bright future. Unlike the oil patch, which forces many workers to leave their families, forestry jobs tend to be located closer to where people live, and in the communities wrestling with some of BC's highest unemployment rates.

As an added bonus, the capacity of

wood to store carbon also makes forestry management a part of the climate solution.

If we were to substantially invest in reforestation, process wood waste, and implement policies that finally move us up the value chain (instead of shipping raw logs) forestry could be a key part of a sustainable jobs strategy. We estimate a carbon-focused jobs agenda in forestry could result in 15,000 more manufacturing jobs and another 5,000 seasonal tree-planting jobs per year. That's far more jobs in more BC communities than we could ever expect from LNG.

PLANK 3: AN AMBITIOUS HOUSING PLAN

Housing construction and sales have been driving recent employment. But we need to cool the market if we're going to deal with the affordability crisis. So as we do so, we need to ensure jobs in this sector are sustained in a different and better way.

Marc Lee, in his recent CCPA report on affordable housing, proposes a comprehensive plan to publicly fund the construction of 10,000 units of new social and co-op housing every year. A build-out of this scale would create 16,250 direct jobs per year plus another 12,250 indirect jobs. The cost of this large-scale building program would be approximately \$2.5 billion a year.

How to pay for that? As with the climate action investments mentioned above, much of this would be done through capital expenditures amortized over many years. Moreover, costs would be recouped over time in the rent collected from tenants. At the end of the day, investment in social housing leaves the provincial government with an income-generating asset.

A large chunk of the funding, however, should come from a revamped property tax, where property tax rates are linked to the value of a home. We could make property taxes more fair by shifting to progressive property taxes with multiple tiers — which could predictably raise another \$1.7 billion a year.

We should also overhaul the home-owners grant (HOG), which costs over \$800 million a year, much of that going to wealthier people who don't need it. A better use of our public resources would be to replace the HOG with a new housing credit that goes to all low- and middle-income people, both renters and owners alike.

PLANK 4: THE \$10-A-DAY CHILD CARE PLAN

It's long past time BC adopted the \$10-a-day universal public child care plan, developed by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators.

Universal child care in BC means sound early-childhood education and child development, greater equality for women, and less pressure on young families.

As we deal with the housing affordability crisis we need to ensure jobs in this sector are sustained in a different and better way.

But the \$10-a-day child care plan should also be understood as a key jobs program. That's because:

- According to research published last year by CCPA economist Iglia Ivanova, it would boost women's labour force participation, resulting in 39,000 more women employed in BC's paid labour force.
- It would result in the direct employment of many more child care workers — about 8,000 net new full-time positions in every corner of BC.

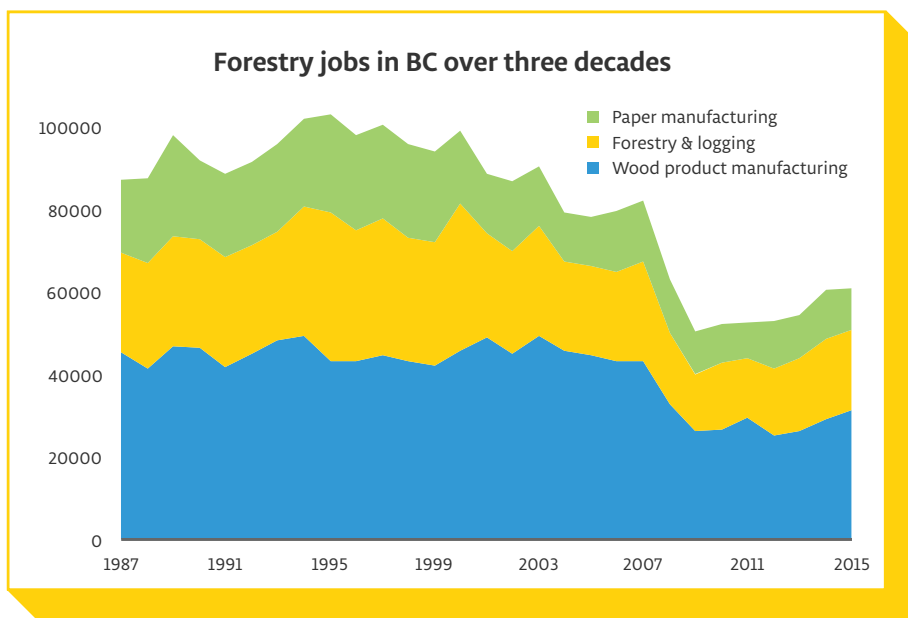
And these estimates don't include construction jobs building new child care spaces, or indirect jobs in related services such as supplies and food.

How to pay for it? Fully implemented (which would take about 10 years), the \$10-a-day plan would cost approximately \$1.5 billion a year.

Iglia Ivanova's research shows that, in large part, the plan would pay for itself through higher employment rates for women, who in turn pay income and other taxes. The remaining funding gap can be covered by modest and staged personal income tax increases for the top two per cent of BC tax-filers, and a one percentage point increase in the corporate income tax rate.

So there you have it. We can build a jobs plan that is hopeful and exciting, that reaches every corner of BC, and that makes a substantial difference to people's lives. And we can pay for these needed public investments in a way that reduces inequality and makes our tax system more fair.

Seth Klein is the BC Director of the CCPA.



SOURCE: BC STATS, 2016. STATISTICS CANADA, LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (UNPUBLISHED DATA)



Fracking has no place near critical dams or reservoirs

BY BEN PARFITT

Last year, a dubious record was set when a magnitude 4.6 earthquake was triggered near Fort St. John during a natural gas industry fracking operation. The tremor was just the latest to be linked to the controversial brute force gas extraction technique, and almost certainly was noted at BC Hydro's corporate headquarters in downtown Vancouver, a 13-hour drive away.

Unbeknownst to residents in the region or in BC more generally, senior officials at the publicly owned hydro utility have been alarmed for years about fracking's destructive powers.

In fact, since at least 2009, dam safety officials at BC Hydro have worried that fracking near one of its Peace River dams could possibly destroy the dam.

The facility in question is the Peace Canyon dam near the community of Hudson's Hope. Faults near the dam bear similarity to those near the Baldwin Hill Dam in Los Angeles, which failed in 1963, spilling hundreds of millions of gallons of water onto households below. Five people were killed in that disaster, which was linked to oil and gas company "fluid injection" operations. In a worst case scenario, BC Hydro officials fear fracking could trigger a similar tragedy here in BC.

The fact that such fears have been withheld from the public for nearly a decade — and have only now surfaced in documents that BC Hydro was compelled to release under a formal Freedom of Information request — is, to put it mildly, a concern.

But of even greater concern is the utter lack of action to date by our elected leaders. The provincial government is ultimately responsible for BC Hydro. It can tell fossil fuel companies where they

can operate, and it can just as easily tell them where they cannot. But it isn't doing so.

"In my view, which I have already shared, the province should simply add buffer zones around any Very Extreme and Very High Consequence Dams, where hydraulic fracturing [fracking] cannot be undertaken without a prior full investigation into the risks, and an implemented risk management plan," one exasperated BC Hydro official wrote in a 2013 email released with the FOI materials. "Why is this so difficult?"

One explanation is that our government views its economic development plans — specifically plans to build LNG processing plants on BC's coast — as more important than health and safety concerns.

Should just one such plant materialize, gas drilling and fracking would skyrocket. "Carpet bombing" is how one senior safety official with BC Hydro describes it. Much of that "bombing" would take place on either side of the Peace River, including along what could one day become the reservoir impounded by a new, controversial, \$9 billion dam on the Peace River — Site C.

Remote as the possibility may be that fracking could destroy BC Hydro's two existing dams on the Peace River, the Crown corporation isn't idly waiting to find out. For nearly a decade it has quietly



worked with BC's oil and gas industry regulator to try to exclude fracking within five kilometres of both dams and of its proposed Site C dam.

An “understanding” has emerged between the two that no new tenures allowing companies rights of access to gas resources in the exclusion zones will be granted.

But the understanding does not take the form of a formal regulation. Worse, Energy Minister Bill Bennett, whose ministerial portfolio includes BC Hydro, hasn't said a word about it.

British Columbians, in particular those living downstream of the Peace River's dams, deserve better. For the health and safety of people in the region and to protect water and hydro resources that all British Columbians depend on, it's long past time that the provincial government acted.

When the health and well-being of communities is at stake, “understandings” are not enough.

First, it should declare firm “no-go zones” where all fracking is prohibited, with immediate attention to the Peace River valley's hydro dams and reservoirs

Second, it should transfer powers to set no-go zones from the Oil and Gas Commission to the provincial Environment Ministry. The OGC is simply too closely tied to the industry it regulates to have credibility on this file.

And third, the government should require provincial Ministry of Health or Ministry of Public Safety personnel to review all proposed fracking operations, and deny any that endanger public health and safety.

Finally all of this must be done in a transparent way. When the health and well-being of communities is at stake, “understandings” are not enough.

Ben Parfitt is a Resource Policy Analyst with the CCPA-BC.

Our 2016 Rosenbluth Lecture

BY IGLIKA IVANOVA

This year, the CCPA-BC's annual Gideon Rosenbluth Memorial Lecture featured economist Pierre Fortin, who shared lessons from Quebec's experience with low-fee, publicly funded child care.

Professor Fortin spoke about research he conducted with colleagues at the University of Sherbrooke, which found that for every \$1 invested in the Quebec child care program, the provincial and federal governments received \$1.47 in direct returns. These returns came from higher tax revenues gained from allowing more mothers of young children to return to work, from a decrease in single-parent families on social assistance, and from lower reliance on other income-tested benefits as family incomes went up.

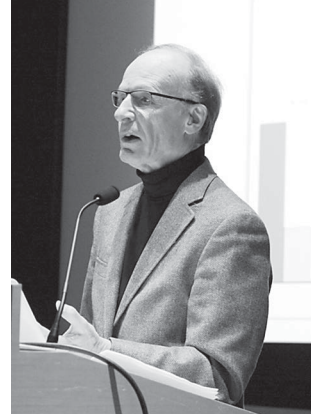
Moreover, affordable quality child care programs are a smart public investment because they have been linked to improvements in child development, social inclusion and gender equity—which are harder to quantify but very significant.

Professor Fortin made a compelling case for a universal public child care program, with additional resources dedicated to children who need extra supports, rather than one targeted to low-income children alone.

He also noted major differences in the quality of child care programming in Quebec, with private for-profit providers offering lower-quality programs on average than public and non-profit providers.

For more details, visit policynote.ca/fortin2016 to listen to the event audio (including my mini-presentation on implementing a \$10-a-day child care plan in BC), view photos or download slides.

Iglika Ivanova is a Senior Economist and Public Interest Researcher at the CCPA-BC.



The New Climate Denialism

Time for an intervention

BY SETH KLEIN & SHANNON DAUB

This article is published as part of the Corporate Mapping Project, a research and public engagement initiative investigating the power of the fossil fuel industry. The CMP is jointly led by the University of Victoria, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Parkland Institute, and is supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Learn more at: corporatemapping.ca

For decades, the urgent need for climate action was stymied by what came to be known as “climate denialism”. In an effort to create public confusion and stall political progress, the fossil fuel industry poured tens of millions of dollars into the pockets of foundations, think tanks, lobby groups, politicians and academics who relentlessly questioned the overwhelming scientific evidence that human-caused climate change is real and requires urgent action.

Thankfully, the climate deniers have now mostly been exposed and repudiated.

Relatively few politicians now express misgivings about the reality or science of climate change (the US president-elect being a notable exception). Our own prime minister and all Canadian premiers (except, arguably, Saskatchewan’s Brad Wall) publicly recognize the reality of climate change.

That’s the good news.

The bad news is that we face a new form of climate denialism — more nuanced and insidious, but just as dangerous.

In the new form of denialism, the fossil fuel industry and our political leaders assure us that they understand and accept the scientific warnings about climate change — but they are in denial about what this scientific reality means for policy and/or continue to block progress in less visible ways.

Claiming that we can take effective action on climate change and ramp-up fossil fuel production at the same time is what CCPA senior economist Marc Lee refers to as “all the above” policy-making.

It’s what former Prime Minister Harper was doing when he claimed Canada could be a climate leader while at the same time increasing fossil fuel production,

so long as industry reduced emissions per unit of oil, gas or coal produced.

It’s what Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Notley are doing when they say we will have carbon pricing and various regulations, while at the same time supporting expanded oil sands production and new bitumen pipelines.

It’s what Premier Clark is doing when she proclaims BC will be a climate “leader” while at the same time pursuing a ramp-up in natural gas fracking and the development of an LNG export industry.

And it’s what Canada is doing when we sign the Paris agreement on climate while failing to adopt the stringent policies that will help keep global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

The “all of the above” approach is wishful thinking at best.

The new climate denialism operates hand-in-glove with Indigenous Rights and Title denialism, in which politicians similarly claim to accept recent court rulings and the historic reality of Aboriginal

BELOW JUSTIN TRUDEAU AND PROVINCIAL PREMIERS AT THE UNITED NATIONS COP 21 CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE. SOURCE: PROVINCE OF BC / FLICKR.COM



Rights and Title, but are unwilling to accept what rights and title mean in practical policy terms.

Indigenous rights denialism finds expression in particular when rights and title are at odds with the power and interests of the corporate fossil fuel sector.

We see both Indigenous rights denialism and climate denialism at play in various fights over pipelines. In the case of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain project, for example, numerous First Nations along the route have firmly rejected the proposed pipeline expansion. There is clear evidence that the pipeline is also at odds with Canada's commitment to lower its greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, both federal and provincial governments remain firmly in favour.

What part of either Aboriginal Rights and Title or climate change science is confusing here? Why is this clear NO so contentious?

Talking honestly about what climate change and Indigenous rights mean for the policy choices before us is admittedly challenging. The public is nervous, and many are deeply anxious about their

Indigenous rights denialism finds expression in particular when rights and title are at odds with the power and interests of the corporate fossil fuel sector.

economic security and jobs. So the urge to take an "all of the above" approach is understandable.

We can acknowledge the steps our political leaders have taken towards becoming climate leaders — but we need to keep pushing them to meaningful action.

Real leadership requires leading a different conversation, one where we speak frankly about the scope of transformational change that lies before us in the next thirty years.

It may be difficult to imagine a world that isn't dependent on fossil fuels, or a future where Indigenous Peoples exercise their full historic rights — and there's no doubt it will take hard work to get there. But just as children today have never known smoking to be permitted in restaurants or driving without mandatory seatbelt laws (both changes that were fiercely resisted by industry but are now fairly universally accepted as the new normal), those born in the coming decades likely won't know what a gas station is, except for what they see in old movies.

The reality of climate change means that one way or another, the next generation is going to live through an industrial revolution in high speed. That's simply a fact. Our political leaders need to move past these current incarnations of denialism, and focus instead on making sure the transition can occur in a just manner.

Seth Klein is the BC Director of the CCPA. Shannon Daub is the Associate Director of CCPA-BC and co-director of the Corporate Mapping Project.

The Kinder Morgan decision

It wasn't unexpected, but still. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's decision to greenlight the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion was deeply disappointing. In spite of campaigning quite boldly on climate change — and attracting a host of new voters in the process — Trudeau chose to double down on fossil fuels.

We've published lots of material on climate, pipelines and the Kinder Morgan decision specifically. Much of this work has been led by Senior Economist Marc Lee. Marc's work on climate justice over the past nine years has critically assessed our federal and provincial governments' obsession with economic policy hinged on ever-more oil and gas extraction — and shown an alternative path forward that would see us truly take the science of climate change seriously.

Below are some of the latest pipeline resources from Marc and other CCPA analysts (and you can find out more about an agenda for climate justice at policyalternatives.ca/climate-justice).

→ **Pipelines vs Paris: Canada's climate conundrum** — blog post by Marc detailing the carbon emissions associated with specific new pipelines policynote.ca/pipelines-vs-paris

→ **The wrong direction: A presentation on the proposed Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion** — by Seth Klein policynote.ca/wrong-direction

→ **826 reasons Kinder Morgan got a green light for its Trans Mountain pipeline expansion** — blog post by Mike Lang and Shannon Daub corporatemapping.ca/826-reasons

→ **Kinder Morgan's pipeline sales pitch: Too good to be true?** — blog post by Marc policynote.ca/pipeline-sales-pitch

Building a community of progressive visionaries

BY LEO YU

This fall, we held our inaugural CCPA-BC Visionaries Social in Vancouver where guests shared their stories, concerns and ideas with other members of our CCPA-BC community.

Everyone agreed it was a wonderful time and the feedback from those who attended was so positive we've decided to make the Social an annual event.

The group of 15 individuals who attended — each with unique backgrounds, interests, and progressive values — listened to Director Seth Klein talk about the CCPA-BC's recent research, our progressive jobs plan and other work leading up to the spring BC election. I especially enjoyed the round of questions and comments from the group in response to Seth's presentation.

A CCPA Visionary is someone who has included the CCPA as a beneficiary in their will. It is a legacy gift that you plan now to benefit the CCPA in the future. We encourage you to leave a part of your legacy to support both the National and BC Offices. In the absence of specifically designating the BC Office, 100 per cent of bequests automatically go to the National Office.

If you have questions about how to accurately designate the CCPA's BC and/or National Offices as beneficiaries, I'd be pleased to speak with you over the phone or in person. I can be reached at 604-801-5121 ext. 225 or leo@ccpabc.ca.

We would love to know if you have already planned, or are planning, a legacy gift to the CCPA-BC Office. And we sincerely thank you for making social, economic and environmental justice a part of your legacy.

We're moving

What's a 20th anniversary without some new beginnings? We're excited to announce that starting January 21st, the CCPA-BC will have a new address. Please make a note for your records:

520 – 700 West Pender Street, Vancouver BC, V6C 1G8

Our phone and email addresses will remain the same, and we have set up mail forwarding to make sure your letters still get to us.

We're sad to be leaving the historic Dominion Building, which has been our home since the CCPA-BC officially opened our doors 1997. But we're excited to finally have all the space we need for our staff, student interns, and even the occasional visitor. And we'll be more centrally located and transit-accessible.



With a new publication design and new office, a lot is changing at the CCPA-BC. But as we enter our 20th year, a lot is staying the same — we're still the same progressive, number-crunching nerds you know and love, and we'll work as hard as ever in service of social, environmental and economic justice.

BC SOLUTIONS

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