

Large, Diverse, Non-partisan Coalition of Youth, Artists, Scientists, Indigenous Leaders and Groups Calls for Green New Deal for Canada

Urgent climate action must cut emissions in half within 11 years

For Immediate Release

May 6, 2019 (Montreal) — On the same day the UN released its dire report on the state of the planet’s biodiversity, a growing movement of youth, artists, workers, Indigenous peoples, scientists and faith leaders, including more than 60 organizations, unions and associations, launched a Pact for a Green New Deal in three cities across the country. The coalition includes CUPE Ontario, the Canadian Health Coalition, the Canadian Unitarian Council, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Indigenous Climate Action, Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) and the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, as well as 50 prominent Canadians, including K.D. Lang, Rufus Wainwright, Dr. David Suzuki and Cobie Smulders.

The Pact for a Green New Deal demands we cut emissions in half by 2030, protect critical cultural and biological diversity, create a million jobs, and address the multiple crises we face through a holistic and far reaching plan that respects the constitutionally enshrined and internationally recognized rights of Indigenous peoples. This large, non-partisan coalition calls on all federal political parties, in the lead up to the election, to put versions of the Green New Deal that meet those goals in their platforms. A new poll by Abacus Data shows a clear majority of Canadians (61 per cent) support the idea of a Green New Deal.

“In our lifetime, youth have seen both the degradation of our climate and any sense of stable livelihoods. We are the first generation in human history whose quality of life is predicted to be lower than our parents. The Green New Deal is the first sign of hope our generation has,” said Niklas Agarwal, student and youth organizer. “The Green New Deal is the safest choice for how we move forward, it recognizes that climate change requires urgent action but is also an opportunity to make our communities healthier and create a million good jobs in the process.”

In the face of record heat waves, floods, wildfires, and increasing global dislocation due to climate change, scientists have said the window in which we have to act is getting short and have given us just 11 years to cut our emissions in half. Two billionaires control as much wealth as almost a third of the population in Canada, Indigenous Nations are continually marginalized and reported hate crimes have increased nearly 50% in 2017.

“As a result of colonialism, our territories were stolen and ravaged, and we are still fighting for full control over what happens to our lands and waters. Every single aspect of a Green New Deal must simultaneously include Indigenous peoples - at the decision making level, the reporting level, and the implementation level,” stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. “This will require that our movements, and the government, support the full implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, including Free, Prior and Informed Consent, granting our communities true decision making powers in our territories.”

"A Green New Deal must be a deal for everyone. Facing the climate crisis means facing the many other crises — economic inequality, housing insecurity, precarious work, and rising racism — that threaten our communities and social fabric. We can build universal and far-reaching solutions that transform our economy, create dignified work, prioritize public ownership, and make our communities healthier. But we have to come together with a plan to do it. That’s what the Green New Deal is,” says Fred Hahn, president of the 270,000 member Canadian Union of Public Employees - Ontario.

Inspired by *Le Pacte* in Quebec, a climate action pledge which has already garnered more than 270,000 signatures, The Pact for a Green New Deal calls on workers, Indigenous communities, students, trade unions, migrants, community organizations and people across the country to define a plan for a safe future and more prosperous present that meets the demands of science and justice.

“It’s been six months since we launched The Pact for Transition (Le pacte pour la Transition) in Quebec. We are happy to see that its success inspired diverse groups to mobilize across Canada and it is, with pride, that we call today upon good willing people, of any age, from all backgrounds, to endorse The Pact for a Green New Deal. There are more and more people

joining the movement to act on climate change. And the more we are, the stronger we become at demanding political and economic solutions that meet the urgency of the climate crisis,” said Dominic Champagne, playwright and instigator of The Pact for Transition in Quebec.

The new coalition is also engaging communities to further refine and develop the plan and will be holding town halls across the country to develop concrete policy suggestions to help us meet what the calls of science and justice are demanding.

“It's going to come down to each one of us rolling up our sleeves and fixing our planet,” said How I Met Your Mother and Avengers actress Cobie Smulders. “Ordinary people doing extraordinary things can rise to the challenge of climate change, seize this historic opportunity and make sure that the climate crisis becomes a catalyst for a fairer, cleaner world for everybody. A Green New Deal for Canada is how we do that.”

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To see the text of the pledge and a list of all endorsers and speakers, please visit greennewdealcanada.ca.

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