



Our Common Platform

A Path to a Green
Economy in Canada

Prepared by
The Green Economy Network (GEN)
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The warnings by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are clear: the current level of greenhouse gas emissions is already consuming the entire global carbon budget.

Market forces on their own are not able to provide the kind of transition that will prevent catastrophic climate change. Governments must step up to the plate by working and providing leadership for the common good and public interest. Canada must implement an ambitious climate policy to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.

A significant industrial transformation will be required to move to a net-zero carbon economy. Such a change will eliminate or transform many existing jobs, which could undermine a much-needed social consensus in Canada for a way forward.

To address this, we must implement a decarbonization strategy that puts workers first. The strategy must embody social support, re-employment, and compensation measures, and be devised with the participation of workers and their representatives.

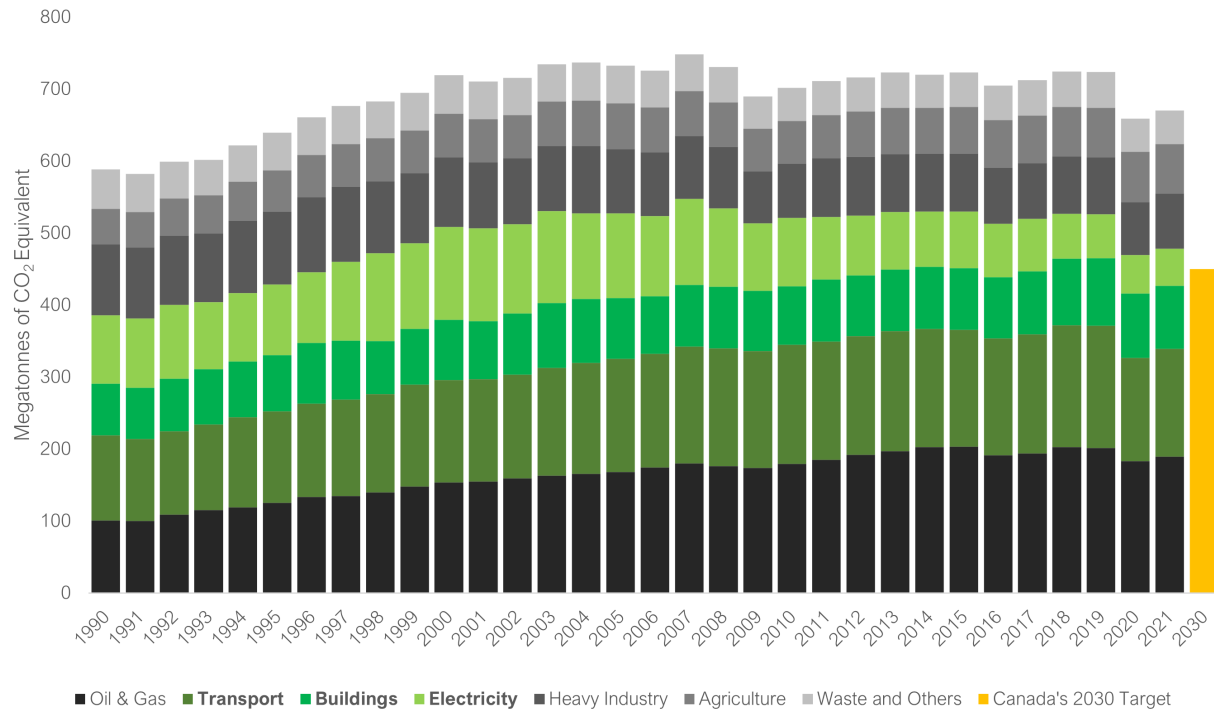
The Government of Canada has declared its support on the world stage for a just transition. This, along with Canada's Paris Agreement pledge, commits the country to reducing carbon emissions by 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030 while simultaneously tackling poverty and social inequality, as well as supporting workers who will be affected by the shift to a net-zero economy by 2050.

However, by the government's own admission, it is currently not on-track to meet its emissions targets. Even with the passing of the federal *Emissions Reduction Plan* in 2022, Canada remains ill-prepared to reach its emission targets by 2030. Moreover, the government has not committed enough resources to create new, good jobs in the wake of inevitable labour market disruptions that will occur if the needed steps to reduce carbon emissions are taken. Now is the time to enact a bold industrial strategy that Canada does not miss this generation-defining chance.

An alliance of unions, with environmental, public interest, and faith-based organizations are working together through the Green Economy Network to put these principles to practice by calling for big green investments over the next five years.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Economic Sector, Canada, 1990 to 2021



Source: Environment and Climate Change Canada (2023) [National Inventory Report 1990-2020: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada](#).

We can both reduce Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions and create decent paying jobs. Public investment must be secured to support three strategic priorities:

1. Renewable Energy — Public investments totaling **\$40 billion** over five years for investments in greening Canada’s electricity systems.

The federal government has made progress through the development of the *Clean Electricity Regulations*. However, further investments need to be made in renewable energy development and transmission capacity between provinces to reach the government’s goal of a net-zero electricity system by 2035 as electrification increases.

\$20 billion for investments in cross-province electricity transmission.

\$15 billion dedicated to investments in renewable energy generation and storage.

\$5 billion for investments in Indigenous and rural communities.

2. Green Buildings — \$65.5 billion to increase the energy efficiency of Canada’s building stock (i.e., residential, commercial, public) over 5 years.

The government has made progress in promoting home and building retrofits through the introduction of the *Canada Green Buildings Strategy*. However, the current level of investments made to decarbonize the sector are insufficient to ensure our homes and buildings are entirely net-zero by 2050. Moreover, the government’s current green homes grant program is inaccessible to millions of Canadians, particularly low-income ones.

\$50 billion for deep retrofits on Canada’s residential building stock.

\$10 billion for a Low-Income Housing Retrofit Grant Program retrofit program that would see the government cover 100% of upfront costs for eligible candidates upgrading housing units.

\$1 billion for a Non-Profit Sector Retrofit Grant Program to support the retrofitting of buildings and residences within the non-profit sector.

\$500 million to a federal agency dedicated to improving retrofitting productivity.

\$4 billion to support the development of retrofits for large-scale commercial infrastructure and make our domestic supply chains more energy efficient.

\$1.25 billion for a program that would train the workers needed to provide the large quantity of retrofits needed to get to net-zero.

3. Public Transit — \$82.75 billion investment over five years to enhance public transit systems within and between communities in Canada.

As it currently stands, transit in Canada both between and within communities is underdeveloped. This means more automobiles on the road and planes in the air, and in turn, more carbon emissions than optimal. Incentivizing folks to use carbon intensive modes of travel less means making public, low-carbon alternatives accessible, reliable, and affordable.

\$30.75 billion for transit within communities and extended bus routes between municipalities

\$52 billion for high-speed rail along the Windsor-Quebec City, Calgary-Edmonton, and Vancouver-Seattle-Portland corridors.

Projected Employment Impacts of the Common Platform

	\$ Billions Invested Over Five-Year Period	Jobs Created
Renewable Energy	\$40.0	500,000 – 640,00
Green Buildings	\$65.5	500,000 – 640,000
Public Transit	\$82.75	770,000 – 1.09 million
Five-Year Totals	\$188.25	1.77 million – 2.42 million

Our Common Platform lays a foundation for tackling climate change while creating good jobs. It also provides a strategy to address poverty and inequality.

Let’s act now to make this a reality.

Read and share the full GEN Common Platform
greeneconomy.net.ca



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