

# CANADIAN YOUTH CLIMATE COALITION

## THE DECLARATION

Climate change is more than just an environmental issue.

When farmers' crops fail from unnatural droughts, this is a livelihood issue. When our grandparents die from heat waves, this is a health issue. When the animals we traditionally hunt are no longer there, this is a survival issue. When melting sea ice opens up the Northwest Passage, this is a sovereignty issue. When we can no longer play hockey on outdoor rinks, this is a cultural issue. When I lose my job because industry refused to adapt to a changing world, this is an economic issue.

Our future is at stake; the climate crisis is our issue.

As Canadian youth, we declare our right to a healthy future and accept our responsibility to ensure the same for our children.

The arctic is melting before our eyes and Indigenous cultures and peoples are being destroyed. Hurricanes and super storms are raging around the world. Small island nations are disappearing under sea levels rising. Our governments and industries are ignoring the greatest crisis of our time. We are seeing over the tipping point. We are seeing this in our lifetime.

This is the world in which we live, and this is the world that we, as youth, are inheriting. This is the world we refuse to pass on to our children. The climate crisis is upon us. Our choice is clear.

Today we stand up. Today we draw our line in the sand. We say this far and no further. We will no longer be silenced. We will no longer compromise our future. We will create alternatives, we will mobilize ourselves and we will build a better world.

### **We are:**

- Taking action to reduce energy use, educate our peers, and reduce our emissions.
- Making the climate crisis a priority for all Canadians, in the absence of meaningful action or leadership by the government and mainstream industry.
- Working in high schools, on campuses, in communities and at all levels of government to organize actions and develop social, political and technological solutions from coast to coast to coast.

**We envision:**

- A country that generates energy cleanly and uses energy intelligently and equitably; where transportation is sustainable and accessible; where our cities are healthy and livable; where our employment reflects our values and where industry is accountable for its actions.
- A country where the inherent value of all life is respected and our interdependence with the natural world acknowledged; where resources and opportunities are distributed equitably; and where communities are healthy, connected and sustainable.
- A safe and just future with personal, economic, cultural and environmental security.

**We demand** that any plan addressing the climate crisis include:

- Deep emission reductions that meet and exceed our international obligations, and implement renewable energy strategies;
- The elimination of fossil fuel subsidies;
- A comprehensive adaptation strategy for those communities already affected by climate change that incorporates and acknowledges the requirements of Indigenous communities;
- Reforms to our curriculum to properly educate youth from kindergarten to post-secondary on the impacts of, and solutions to, climate change; and
- Official positions for youth in directing Canada's climate change policies.

We can no longer afford to sit idle. Our culture, health, security, environment, prosperity and future are at stake. This is not a dress rehearsal. The government must make concrete short and long-term plans, and take direct action now!

We call on you to join us - to heed this call, to take responsibility for this crisis and to help mobilize the resistance. We did not create this crisis but we must and will build and create the solution.

It is with this goal at heart that on the 10th of September 2006, representatives from 48 of Canada's youth organizations united to form the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition. We commit to doing our part for our country, our culture and our kids; we only ask that you commit to the same.

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