

Beyond carbon pricing—a seven-point plan

October 29 2015, by Alan Christie



New York City's daily carbon dioxide emissions represented as one-tonne spheres. Credit: Carbon Visuals via flickr

The new federal government must articulate a broad and clear agenda that recognizes climate change is a fundamental global threat demanding Canadian leadership, two major think tanks say.

A report released Oct. 27 by the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto and the Broadbent Institute suggests "broader changes to our economy beyond [carbon pricing](#)" must be made if the country is to move toward a low-carbon economy.

Justin Trudeau, who will be sworn in as prime minister on Nov. 4, is slated to attend a United Nations conference on [climate change](#) in Paris and has invited opposition leaders and provincial premiers to go with him. The conference runs from Nov. 30 - Dec. 11.

The think tanks' joint report suggests the politicians reach a consensus on how to deal with climate change before the conference.

Paul Sommerville, executive director of Mowat's energy research hub, said in a release that "the report lays the foundation for a national conversation about how to systematically address climate change that needs to happen immediately with the new federal government."

The report, titled "Step Change: Federal Policy Ideas Toward a Low-Carbon Canada," outlines seven policy ideas in addition to carbon pricing that could help the federal government steer Canada in the future. They are:

- A Green Bank of Canada, a state-sponsored entity that promotes greater private-sector investment in the low carbon economy through such things as credit enhancements, guarantees, project aggregation and securitization.
- A tax code retrofit that would favour energy efficiency, renewable energy and other sustainable technologies, supported by a phase-out of remaining fossil fuel subsidies.
- An accelerated phase-out of coal which requires an amendment to the Reduction of Carbon Dioxide Emissions Coal-Fired Generation of Electricity Regulations.

- A green building compact including a suite of federal energy efficiency and renewable policies, a revamp of codes and standards, a National Deep Retrofit Program and a renewable heating program.
- A "lead by example" mandate that would see energy initiatives completed in federal facilities and institutions.
- A clean transportation strategy that includes a progressive Vehicle Emissions Tax, a Zero Emission Vehicle mandate and a revamp of infrastructure spending and transfer criteria to include greenhouse gas goals.
- A bio strategy to promote best practices in the agricultural and forestry sectors, from cross-compliance with existing funding programs to voluntary initiatives in farming practices.

Sommerville said "we believe the measures outlined here will attract support of a large majority of Canadians who believe we must do more to address climate change. Getting behind the package of policy measures would send an important signal of our commitment to the international community."

Rick Smith, executive director of the Broadbent Institute, said carbon pricing alone is not sufficient because "first, the price of carbon would have to jump too quickly to create changes in behaviour needed in the short term. Second, while carbon pricing is like the most efficient economy-wide measure to address greenhouse gas reductions, there are many specific instances of market failure that carbon pricing fails to address."

The Mowat Centre is an independent public think tank located at the School of Public Policy & Governance at U of T. The Broadbent Institute is an independent organization that promotes democracy, equality and sustainability and the training of a new generation of leaders.

More information: Step Change: Federal Policy Ideas Toward a Low-Carbon Canada, mowatcentre.ca/112-step-change/

Provided by University of Toronto

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