

October 18, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Wilkinson:

Speaking on behalf of eight Canadian public health and health care organizations, we urge you to take the steps needed to protect the health of people across Canada, our global neighbours, and future generations from the climate crisis.

As you are aware, many people in Canada have already lost their lives to [extreme heat](#), [wildfires](#), [ice storms](#) and [floods](#) amplified by climate change. In June, over [600 people](#) in mainland BC died prematurely because of a heat wave of unprecedented intensity. The [mental and physical health of many more people](#) is being affected by melting permafrost, rising sea levels, insect- and tick-borne diseases, and climate-related events that have become more frequent and more intense with global warming. In fact, researchers have estimated that wildfire smoke alone is producing [\\$4.7 to \\$20.8 billion in health-related impacts](#), each year, in Canada. How can we afford **not** to act?

As with COVID-19, global warming will have a [much greater impact on vulnerable and disadvantaged populations](#). Older people, young children, and people with pre-existing health conditions such as asthma are more sensitive to stressors such as heat and air pollution. People who live on low incomes are at greater risk because they are more likely to live or work in places that lack air conditioning; less likely to have access to green space or pools; and less likely to have the resources to recover from floods and wildfires. Climate change is also amplifying food insecurity and mental distress for Indigenous populations that rely heavily on the land for their food.

Specifically, we call on you to:

- Update Canada's commitments under the Paris Agreement to do our [fair share](#), as a wealthy nation that is among the top 10 emitters in the world, to limit warming to 1.5°C;
- Build health-related costs and co-benefits into the plan;
- Deliver a rapid transition away from fossil fuels by ending the expansion of the oil and gas industry, phasing out subsidies and financing for fossil fuels, and shifting current financing into the development of clean energy and energy efficiency;

- Ensure that the transition is just by involving labour from the fossil fuel sector and other high-emitting sectors, and the communities built around these sectors, in the development of the transition plan;
- Provide the funds promised to [low-income countries](#) to help them achieve the mitigation and adaptation measures needed recognizing the harm that wealthier nations such as Canada have inflicted on them with our heavy emissions, and effectively [spearhead establishment of the delivery plan](#) for all developed countries to do the same;
- Commit toward the building of climate resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable communities [and healthcare systems as has been requested by the COP26 Health Programme in the leadup to COP26](#);
- Accelerate Canada's development of a national adaptation plan and ensure that the plan prioritizes health and the capacity of the public health and health care systems;
- Ensure that the pandemic recovery supports climate action, improves public health, and reduces social and health inequities;
- Foster resilience and interconnectedness with [nature](#) with explicit commitments for protection, conservation, and restoration; and
- [Uphold human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights.](#)

These actions are essential first steps toward the protection of people around the world. Your government has already taken important steps to cut climate emissions, create jobs in the green economy, and support healthier communities, but much more is needed. Your government's legacy to Canada and the world can be the additional bold measures required to stave off the existential threat of global warming.

Sincerely,



Kim Perrotta MHSc, Executive Director, CHASE



Ian Culbert, Executive Director, CPHA



Katharine Smart, MD, FRCPC, President, CMA



Linda Silas, CFNU President



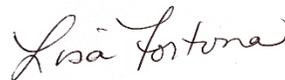
Michael Villeneuve, RN, M.Sc., FAAN, CEO, CNA



Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director, OPHA



Anjali Helferty, Executive Director, CAPE



Lisa Fortuna, President, CIPHI-Ontario

cc The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P., Minister of Health
 Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
 Mr. Elias Abourizk, Deputy Chief Negotiator Director, Policy and Negotiations Government of Canada
 Mr. Steven Kuhn, Chief Negotiator, Director General, Environment and Climate Change Canada