

Election 2008: Groups react to leaders debate – October 2, 2008

Comments in reaction to the environment segment of tonight's leaders' debate



"Stephen Harper was completely wrong when he claimed that Conservative policy will balance the environment and the economy.

The Harper government has supported runaway development of the tar sands, which will blow away improvements of greenhouse gas emissions in other sectors.

Mr. Harper entirely misses the point that green technologies can build a sustainable healthy economy.

This debate has unquestionably confirmed that if Canadians care about the environment, they should vote for anybody but the Conservatives."

Dave Martin
Climate & Energy Coordinator, Greenpeace
www.greenpeace.ca



"On the environment, the spotlight in the debates has been on Mr. Harper, because he's the only leader not to have released an environment platform; in fact, he's said very little about the environment or climate change in the campaign to date.

Unfortunately, Mr. Harper failed to use the opportunity of tonight's debate to outline more effective action to cut greenhouse gas pollution, despite many studies showing the weakness of his current policies. And when talking about those policies, Mr. Harper omitted some key points:

- He referred to his government's proposed regulations for big industrial polluters, but those regulations do not yet exist. And the government has proposed that they take effect only in 2010 - four years from when Mr. Harper took office.

- Mr. Harper talked about his national target for greenhouse gas pollution in 2020. But his government's own analysis shows that the government's "intensity" targets for industry, combined with its other policies, do not come close to adding up to that national target.

- Mr. Harper referred to his proposed targets for oil sands companies, set at a level based on capturing emissions. But he failed to mention that those targets would only enter into force in 2018, a decade from now."

For the Pembina Institute's analysis of the climate/energy-related announcements of all the parties, please visit <http://www.pembina.org/blog>

Matthew Bramley
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"Mr. Harper didn't tell the truth in the debate. His plan will not meet climate change pollution reduction targets. Period.

Mr. Dion and Ms May both did a good job of explaining practical solutions to Canada's economic and environmental challenges. They are both proposing to cut taxes on things society wants more of, like income, and shift them onto things we want less of, like pollution.

The French and English debates both served to accentuate the gulf that exists between the four parties that are proposing plans to protect Canada from the economic, social, and environmental devastation of climate change, and the Conservative party, which is not."

Jean Langlois
National Campaigns Director
Directeur des campagnes nationales
Sierra Club Canada
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"Équiterre is extremely pleased with the fact that the environment and, more specifically, climate change was an important component of the leaders debate last night and that many important statements were made. Indeed, four leaders out of five representing more than 60% of voter intentions in Canada support the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, absolute reductions of green house gas emissions and the application of the polluter pay principle", said Steven Guilbeault of Equiterre.

"It is extremely unfortunate, however, that the Leader of the Conservative Party continued to mislead Canadians in this segment of the debate. It is not true that his plan will lead to a 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels and it is also not true that regulation to reach these targets are now in place. This type of distortion of reality must stop. Mr. Harper must tell the truth so that Canadians can go to the polls on October 14th understanding the proposals of each party to fight climate change. The stakes for future generations are simply too high to play partisan politics on this issue", added Guilbeault.

Steven Guibeault
Équiterre
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