

## Letter to Provincial and Territorial Premiers on the eve of the Moncton 2007 Council of the Federation Meeting

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Dear Provincial and Territorial Premiers:

The actions of several of your governments over the past few months have pointed to a conscious and deliberate attempt to reclaim responsibility for the fight against climate change, as part of the momentum generated by the global efforts to implement the Kyoto Protocol. Given the weakness of the federal government's leadership thus far, the steps you have taken are noteworthy. It is your desire to join the effort against climate change that brings you together, at the height of summer, for this important session of the Council of the Federation.

In light of the federal government's refusal to adopt adequate regulations for Canada's main sources of greenhouse gas emissions - including Industry and the automotive sector -- several of you have decided to step in and start to fill the gap by assuming the leadership that Ottawa has so far refused to assume. By doing so, several of you seem to be closer to your fellow citizens' desire for action on environmental issues than the federal government has yet managed to be.

Premier Campbell summarized the situation eloquently a few weeks ago when he said, "I think it's time for provinces to decide that we're actually in a position where we can lead. There's a lot of things we can do without checking with the federal government, without asking the federal government. And, frankly, in lots of cases we can't wait for the federal government and I'd like to get on with those things."

Currently, some of you have adopted action plans that, if implemented correctly, should lead to absolute reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Included in these plans: a carbon tax, adoption of new standards for automakers, development of "green" energy systems, increased public transit and ambitious energy efficiency goals.

Some of you have begun working with regional emission reduction and exchange markets implemented by certain North-Eastern (RGGI) and Western (WRCAL) states in an attempt to regulate your major industries' emissions and to encourage the creation of a carbon market in your jurisdictions. Premier McGuinty summarized it well when he commented on the federal government's climate change plan: "I think we can reach further and we intend to do that here in Ontario when we put out our climate change plan."

When the Council of the Federation meets in Moncton, the meeting will be aimed, among other things, at further developing your new inter-provincial collaboration on these matters — a collaboration that would have been difficult to imagine just a few months ago.

Clearly, the time has come. Greenhouse gas emissions have increased in Canada as a whole by 25% since 1990, and have grown in each of your provinces as well (from a 5% increase in

Québec to a 61% increase in Saskatchewan). Despite its international commitments, the federal government appears to have washed its hands of the rapid growth in emissions that occurred from 1990 to 2006.

The commitment that some of you have made to the implementation of a Kyoto Protocol target is desirable and welcome. Importantly, measures taken in provincial jurisdiction — without negating the federal government's own immense responsibilities in this area — can have significant impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in Canada. It is refreshing to note that provincial governments have finally taken leadership in a determined attempt to find solutions.

Some of the tools at your disposal, which we encourage you to use as ambitiously as possible, include: responsible energy and natural resource development; better land-use planning at the municipal level; greener investments in transportation infrastructure, with an emphasis on public transit; feed-in tariffs for green power; the responsible approval of new major industrial projects; the encouragement of sustainable agricultural practices; and the development and implementation of leading-edge building codes and sustainable waste management.

Your actions have started to generate political momentum towards climate protection. This is not unlike the momentum generated by the increasing number of U.S. states that have also decided to fill the gap created by their own federal administration's irresponsible lack of action in the fight against climate change.

Furthermore, this momentum can create a beneficial spillover effect on the Canadian federal government. Premier Charest said it very well: "The federal government must therefore react favourably to the leadership demonstrated by the province of Quebec."

In the context of the next round of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Bali next December, the positions taken by the provinces can help to show Canada's international partners that the federal government's current position does not represent the will of the Canadian population, and is little more than a rearguard action that is sure to fail sooner or later. We would be interested in understanding the official position that you would like to see Canada adopt as part of the upcoming negotiations on the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

#### The provinces must directly address the problem's main causes

We hope that you enjoy fruitful exchanges during your meeting that serve to further your collaboration and lead you, we hope, to resolutely address the three main sources that contribute to the emissions responsible for our climate's imbalance: heavy industry, the automotive sector, and the building sector. Canadians cannot understand why industrial polluters are not being required to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, in absolute terms, when it is clear that this is feasible and affordable. Nor do Canadians see why automakers are not forced to sell vehicles that pollute less and consume less energy, when they know automakers have all the necessary technology to do so. Nor is it clear to Canadians why they still lack the energy-efficient buildings that would help both the environment and their pocketbooks.

In conclusion, we support the efforts of certain Council of the Federation members and we are in favour of your initiatives to join regional carbon markets throughout North America. We encourage your efforts to set up a working carbon market in Canada, an initiative that several Canadian industries support. We hope that several more of you will take this opportunity to announce the adoption of California's new automotive emissions standards, which have already been adopted in over a dozen other American states.

Given that the emissions in each of your provinces are on the rise, you will need these measures to reverse the trend. Each of you can make a concrete contribution to the urgent fight against climate change by using the means at your disposal and in accordance with your responsibilities.

Best of luck with this important meeting!

Sincerely,  
Graham Saul

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GSAUL', written in a cursive style.

Executive Director  
Climate Action Network Canada - Réseau action climat Canada