

Climate plans must include Just Transition for environment and economy to thrive

For Immediate Release February 29, TORONTO – Today BLUE GREEN CANADA, a national alliance of Canadian labour unions, environmental and civil society organizations, released a statement encouraging the participants at Thursday's First Minister's Meeting in Vancouver to follow through on their advocacy for just transition in Paris with actions at home.

"Failure to include just transition in Canada's pending climate change plans and principles will mean we risk playing catch up rather than leading our conversion to a lower carbon economy," said Tim Gray, Executive Director of Environmental Defence and Blue Green Canada board member.

A just transition means ensuring Canadians whose livelihoods may be vulnerable to the real and necessary actions needed to cut our CO₂ pollution are not left behind. This requires starting as soon as possible to work with communities, workers, their unions, and industries to identify vulnerable jobs and begin to plan for the changes ahead.

"Action is needed now to begin the transition of workers and communities into lower carbon employment opportunities," said Mark Rowlinson, Assistant to the National Director of the United Steelworkers and Blue Green Canada's President. "Waiting for the next jobs crisis is not sound economic policy."

Blue Green Canada shared its statement on just transition in a letter to Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna ahead of the First Minister's Meeting and recognized Canada's international commitments to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and its advocacy for the inclusion of just transition provisions in the COP21 Paris Agreement.

"When the Prime Minister and Premiers meet in Vancouver it is imperative that the ambition they demonstrated at the COP21 in Paris is made real here at home," said Jamie Kirkpatrick, Blue Green Canada's Program Manager. "Our elected officials need to be prepared to act for the just transition of workers and communities into lower carbon employment opportunities."

See below for the full Blue Green Canada statement.

-30-

For more information contact:

Jamie Kirkpatrick, Blue Green Canada, Program Manager
416-895-3406 (cell); 416-323-9521 ext. 289; jkirkpatrick@bluegreencanada.ca



BLUE GREEN CANADA statement on including Just Transition in Canada's Climate Change Plans

At COP21 in Paris nearly 200 nations came together in broad agreement on the real and pressing need to act on climate change and begin to transition to a global low carbon economy. How this transition occurs is crucial.

Canada's Paris delegation, with the support of Canadian labour unions and environmental organizations, advocated for the inclusion of just transition and decent work language in the COP21 climate agreement and the final Paris Agreement recognizes the *"imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs."* As a result, we believe Canada's climate change plans and principles must include just transition principles to be effective and to help our environment and economy thrive.

We are calling on Canada's governments to follow up on this recent international advocacy for just transition with actions at home. The principles forming the basis for our national climate change plans need to also include just transition principles.

Canada's Climate Change plans should include:

- A pledge to ensure that any costs of our transition to a low carbon economy are not unfairly borne by working women and men.
- Support of reviews of labour force market impacts at provincial and community levels to assess impacted work forces and which transition strategies may be needed.
- Recognition that industry, governments, workers, and unions all need to be involved in crafting transparent and workable just transition plans. Plans need to be flexible and designed for specific workplace and community realities.
- An acknowledgment of the need for industry supported transition funds for impacted workers and communities.
- An acknowledgment of the need for policies in support of impacted workers including support for retraining for new job opportunities, employment insurance flexibility for worker transitions, enhanced severance and salary continuance, pension bridging and early retirement options.

Blue Green Canada is an alliance between Canadian labour unions, environmental and civil society organizations to advocate for working people and the environment by promoting solutions to environmental issues that have positive employment and economic impacts. www.bluegreencanada.ca