



Climate Action Network Canada    Réseau action climat Canada



February 18, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are very pleased to see the United States is now committed to fighting global warming. The change in the political landscape under your Presidency signals that energy security and climate security must go hand-in-hand because tackling global warming is a critical component to both protecting our national security and our environment. Your upcoming trip to Canada presents the United States with an important opportunity to demonstrate its leadership on global warming.

Climate Action Network Canada and the United States Climate Action Network represent more than 100 leading organizations in the U.S. and Canada that are working together to prevent catastrophic climate change and promote sustainable and equitable solutions. We are writing to ask you to please take the following information into consideration as you embark for Canada.

Canada's current climate policies have been widely criticized in Canada, by Parliament, external research bodies, the scientific community and the public. Most Canadian provinces have emissions reduction targets that are much more ambitious than the federal government, and Canada's largest province, Ontario, is moving ahead with a cap and trade system based on absolute caps aimed at meeting its reduction target of 15% below 1990 levels by 2020, with an implementation date of January 1, 2010.

Both the Province of Alberta and Canada rely on flawed "intensity" targets in their regulatory approaches for heavy industry that can allow overall greenhouse gas emissions to increase. Both Alberta's emissions trading system and Canada's proposed emissions trading system also provide the loophole of making contributions to a fund instead of reducing their emissions, thus meeting their targets on paper only.

Further, we are concerned by reports that Canadian government officials are looking for protections for one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada – the tar sands oil projects. Expansion in tar sands oil production and consumption makes any robust

climate or energy security goals very difficult to achieve. Exempting tar sands oil production from greenhouse gas emissions caps would be contrary to working internationally to achieve real greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The more exciting conversation lies in how energy trade between the U.S. and Canada can shift to renewable energy and technologies for energy efficiency. Canada is a vast country with prodigious and largely untapped renewable energy potential. Both countries also have world-class expertise in energy efficiency that is waiting for widespread deployment. Studies show that there are more jobs created by investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency than in fossil fuels.

In moving forward together, Canada needs to overhaul its current approach and raise its level of ambition to have a credible climate change policy. We need science-based caps on emissions with auctioning of permits, no special exemptions for any polluting sectors, and global warming solutions in both our countries that lead to real and rapid emission reductions. Together we know we can help move our countries towards a sustainable energy future that builds our economies in complementary ways.

We wish you a safe and productive trip to Canada.

Sincerely,

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cc:

- Secretary of Energy, Steven Chu
- Secretary of Interior, Ken Salazar
- Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton
- EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson