

To Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Dear Prime Minister,

Canada could become, once again, a world leader by ensuring that the post COVID stimulus expenditures that will be needed address the interrelated crises of climate change, species collapse, and social and structural inequality: a triple benefit.

This is a perfect time to make a greener world. With the Covid lockdown, yes the economy is in need of help. But people have noticed the benefits of less pollution and noise; we have resorted to nature to help cope with lockdown stress. Many of us have come to value indigenous traditional knowledge and leadership about the interconnected web of life.

We have appreciated government leadership to deal with the pandemic and supported the uncomfortable measures that were explained by credible experts. The same kind of government leadership that is needed now to deal with the Climate Crisis and its problems of food insecurity, extreme weather events, environmental racism, refugees, and new health issues.

I believe however that fiscal stimulus will only be successful where Canadians feel that the funds not only produce economic benefits like employment but also address our simmering fears of climate chaos and social unrest. If new investments are seen to benefit large and foreign corporations with an overriding business-as-usual flavour, it will not result in community acceptance and the inspiration to work together toward climate solutions.

I urge you to heed world experts and studies that show that green projects create more jobs, deliver higher short-term returns and lead to long-term cost savings compared to “traditional” stimulus measures. Actions such as procurement of local renewable energy, a community energy stimulus fund, community building retrofit funds, electrification of transport, community nature restoration and water management infrastructure, community gardens (a la “victory” gardens) would provide multiple benefits in terms of employment and products, including for the most marginalized.

Your election indicated that there is consensus in the country about the importance of fighting climate change and diversifying the economy. More recently, it has become clear that there is a further concern about the inequalities highlighted by the Covid death rate and incidents of systemic racism. These intersecting issues can be addressed together while maximizing taxpayer stimulus investment.

You have the opportunity now to take courageous leadership and become a beacon of hope for the future, at home and abroad.

Yours truly,

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