

WORK IN A WARMING WORLD

Adapting Canadian Employment and Work to the Challenges of Climate Change

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Context

Global climate change may be on everyone's lips, but the silence about its impact on the world of work is deafening. Climate change is already shaking up the nature of work and the distribution of employment within and between countries, regions and communities, dislocating people and industries and communities. In Canada, key economic sectors are affected directly by climate change, or indirectly by measures to mitigate its effects, and by the emergence of green technologies. New occupations and professions are springing up and the possibility of new ways of working are crystallizing.

Yet here is the puzzle: Despite our growing concern about environmental sustainability in Canada, research on the implications of climate change for employment and work and its flow-on impact on education and training, public investment, infrastructure and regulation, has scarcely begun. Workplaces of every size and type—from farms to mines to factories to offices to stores to schools to hospitals to home offices—are both significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, and potentially powerful actors in containing global warming.

The central research question is this: How can institutions of work adapt more effectively, and contribute more fully, to the struggle to contain global warming? How will the institutions of work be required to change in the face of climate change?

The Work in a Warming World research programme has four goals:

- Map and evaluate how well labour market organizations are assessing and responding to the impact of climate change on work and employment in their sectors.
- Engage community partners specialising in training, environmental advocacy and work organization in identifying critical spaces for the adaptation of work and employment.
- Turn research into solutions for practical problems, on three levels: linking environment and employment policy; developing and introducing environmentally responsible employment and work practices; greening curriculum at all levels and broadening the environmental focus of active labour market transitions.
- Train a Canadian generation of researchers in the social dimensions of climate change.

In service to these goals, we are developing an ongoing dialogue between climate scientists, workplace organizations and academic researchers in the social and environmental sciences, and law.

*'We have options,
but the past is not
one of them'*

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Academics

- Aguiar, Luis, University British Columbia
- Bazely, Dawn, Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability, York University
- Calvert, John, Simon Fraser University
- Christoff, Peter, University of Melbourne
- Cohen, Marjorie Griffin, Simon Fraser University
- Doorey, David, York University
- Evans, Bryan, Ryerson University
- Henriques, Irene, Schulich, York University
- Holmes, John, Queens University
- Kainer, Jan, York University
- Lipsig-Mumme, Carla, York University
- Mabee, Warren, Queens University
- MacDowell, Laurel, University of Toronto
- McBride, Stephen, Simon Fraser University
- McFarland, Joan, St. Thomas University
- McMurtry, J.J., York University
- Milne, Simon, Auckland University of Technology
- Prudham, Scott, University of Toronto
- Shields, John, Ryerson University
- Sweeney Brendan, University of Manitoba
- Tufts, Steve, York University
- Wood, Stepan, Osgoode Law, York University

Partner Organisations

York University (Canada) is the lead organisation.

- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (British Columbia)
- Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers
- Centre for Labour Studies
- Clean Air Partnership
- Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union
- Environmental Defence
- Forest Products Sector Council
- Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability (IRIS)
- Learning for a Sustainable Future
- National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

Universities



Auckland University of Technology

Faculty of Land and Environments, University of Melbourne

Queen's University

Ryerson University

Simon Fraser University

St. Thomas University

University of British Columbia-Okanagan

University of Manitoba

University of Toronto

York University

- National Union of Public and General Employees
- Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy/ Professional Engineers
- Prism Economics and Analysis
- Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
- Toronto Workforce Innovation Group
- United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Local 1000A
- United Steelworkers of Canada
- UNITE-HERE Canada
- Wood Manufacturing Council.

ⁱ Sauchin, D. and S. Kulshreshtha, in Lemmen, D.S. et al. (2008), Lemmen, D.S., Warren, F.J., Lacroix, J., Bush, E., *From Impacts to Adaptation: Canada in a Changing Climate 2007*, Government of Canada, Ottawa, ON. p.296.