

# OUTREACH REPORT

# ACHIEVING 2050: A CARBON PRICING POLICY FOR CANADA

DIALOGUE ON A UNIFIED CAP-AND-TRADE SYSTEM IN CANADA

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS FROM REGIONAL  
OUTREACH SESSIONS

SPRING-SUMMER 2009



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et l'économie

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Canada

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Available on the Internet.

Also available in French under the title: Objectif 2050 : Politique de prix pour le carbone pour le Canada - Rapport d'information.

Report prepared by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (Canada).



**National Round Table  
on the Environment  
and the Economy**

**Table ronde nationale  
sur l'environnement  
et l'économie**

National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy  
344 Slater Street, Suite 200  
Ottawa, ON K1R 7Y3

Tel.: 613-992-7189  
Fax: 613.992.7385  
E-mail: [admin@nrtee-trnee.ca](mailto:admin@nrtee-trnee.ca)

**[www.nrtee-trnee.ca](http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca)**

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent those of the organizations with which individual Round Table members are associated or otherwise employed.

# LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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**BOB PAGE, PH.D.**  
NRTEE CHAIR

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), I am pleased to transmit to you this report summarizing the key views and opinions of more than 160 stakeholders across Canada. These findings come from six regional outreach sessions held in the spring and summer of this year as follow up to the NRTEE report *Achieving 2050: A Carbon Pricing Policy for Canada*.

Based on the main findings and recommendations of *Achieving 2050*, we engaged in a dialogue with stakeholders across Canada to consider how progress could be made in moving toward a unified system in Canada. This report draws out key issues raised at the sessions and highlights regional areas of concern that participants wanted brought to your, and the federal government's, attention.

Overall, we found broad support for a unified carbon pricing policy approach as set out by the NRTEE, building on current federal government efforts. The need to engage with the United States was highlighted in order to ensure compatibility of policy direction, mechanisms, and costs. Broad support existed for taking action now.

We hope you find this report useful as you consider next steps for Canada in meeting our climate policy goals. The NRTEE would be pleased to meet with you to discuss our findings and assist you as you carry out your important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Page". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Bob Page  
NRTEE Chair

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**“THE REPORT’S VISION OF A NATIONAL, UNIFIED POLICY IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO BASE SUCH A POLICY ON CLEAR PRINCIPLES, SUCH AS THOSE OUTLINED IN *ACHIEVING 2050*.”**

***- Outreach session participant***

## CHAPTER ONE

# BACKGROUND

On April 16, 2009, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) released its report *Achieving 2050: A Carbon Pricing Policy for Canada*. The report sets out a comprehensive road map for establishing a national cap-and-trade system in a phased manner, with adequate transition for industry and consumers to allow Canada to achieve its environmental goals at the least economic cost. The NRTEE conducted original economic modelling, detailed analytical research, and held extensive stakeholder consultation to develop its proposed carbon pricing policy for Canada. It concluded that an economy-wide cap-and-trade system would be the most effective way to achieve the federal government's deep long-term emission reduction targets at least economic cost. The policy is designed to initially contain costs for industry and consumers, but then transition to achieve greater carbon emission reductions through full auction of carbon emission permits in order to meet Canada's environmental targets.

There has been significant response to the report's release across Canada from governments, environmental groups, industry, media, and others. Announcements by Canadian and U.S. political leaders in support of unified cap-and-trade systems in both countries and proposed U.S. legislation involving the creation of an American cap-and-trade system have led to a heightened awareness and concern on the part of Canadians. In response to the country-wide interest in *Achieving 2050*, and the quickly moving climate policy landscape in Canada and the U.S., the NRTEE held a series of outreach sessions in six Canadian cities — Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax — during the spring and summer of 2009, to gauge regional views and gain insights on the potential impact of the proposed carbon pricing policy in its report.

This report highlights the key outcomes from the sessions, including common areas of agreement and divergence and specific issues participants felt the federal government needed to be aware of when moving toward a unified national cap-and-trade system. Using the NRTEE's proposed carbon pricing policy as a basis for dialogue, the sessions included discussions of the NRTEE's policy itself, and explored the implications of such a policy in the regions in which the meetings took place and in the country as a whole. While this summary cannot possibly contain the full range of views on a unified carbon pricing policy in all areas of the country, it does provide insight into support for the NRTEE's proposed policy across Canada.

## PURPOSE OF THE SESSIONS

The purpose of the sessions was twofold — to present and discuss the main findings and recommendations of *Achieving 2050*, and based on the premise that the federal government is moving toward the implementation of some form of a national cap-and-trade system, engage in a dialogue on the overall report and recommendations as a potential starting point for moving toward a national cap-and-trade system. The aim was also to highlight the regional issues and areas of concern that need to be brought to the federal government's attention as it moves toward the design and implementation of a Canada-wide system.

## SESSION FORMAT

Each outreach session was co-hosted by the NRTEE and an organization based in the region. The NRTEE would like to thank the following co-host organizations who ensured the sessions had broad representation and input and facilitated a dialogue to bring forward the issues and concerns facing Canadians across the country on a unified cap-and-trade system:

- Fraser Basin Council (Vancouver session)
- Climate Change Central (Calgary session)
- Association of Power Producers of Ontario (Toronto session)
- Sustainable Prosperity (Ottawa session)
- Conseil patronal de l'environnement du Québec (Montreal session)
- Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (Halifax session)

Each session followed a similar half-day format: the first part consisted of a presentation on and discussion of the main findings and conclusions of *Achieving 2050*, ensuring all participants had a common understanding and basis for discussion with questions and answers. The second part of the discussion was a dialogue, facilitated by the regional co-host of the session. The recommendations of *Achieving 2050* were used as a framework and basis for the discussion.

## WHO ATTENDED

Each session had broad and deep representation from regional environmental, business, academic and labour organizations, all with a concern and interest in not only how a carbon pricing policy would affect their individual or business interests, but also on how it would impact their broader community and region. To ensure candid and open responses, no attribution has been given to any comments. However, lists of attendees are included in the appendix to show the diversity of views represented and the various interests that wanted to ensure their opinions were considered by the federal government as it designs a national cap-and-trade system for Canada.

## WEBSITE

Additional information, photos, and other related materials on these outreach sessions could be found at <http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca/carbon-pricing-outreach>.



## CHAPTER TWO

# OVERALL COMMENTS ON *ACHIEVING 2050*

At every session, there was broad, vocal support for the NRTEE's proposed carbon pricing policy, along with the research and analysis backing the main findings and recommendations of the report. Representative comments include the following:

*"The report's vision of a national, unified policy is a step in the right direction and it is important to base such a policy on clear principles, such as those outlined in Achieving 2050."*

**- Participant at July 2009 Outreach Session in Halifax, Nova Scotia**

Strongly voiced at all sessions, especially from representatives of industry associations, were comments such as, "We applaud the emphasis of *Achieving 2050* on a ***unified national price***. Changing frameworks at the national level, as well as different provincial and regional initiatives, are a struggle." Also common across sessions was support for *Achieving 2050*'s cap-and-trade implementation "road map" as a logical, sequenced approach to implementing an adaptive policy that minimized risks.

But, as one participant said at the Halifax session, “There is no time to ‘wait and see’ and study the report’s recommendations for another decade....The impact of a cap-and-trade is likely minimal. With the current economic downturn and spike in oil prices we have continued and adapted and with a cap-and-trade we will continue to adapt.”

Some participants at a number of sessions questioned the NRTEE’s reason for choosing an economy-wide cap-and-trade system as its carbon pricing instrument rather than a carbon tax. According to some participants, a carbon tax would be administratively simpler to design and implement than a cap-and-trade system. Typical of the comments received in this vein is the following:

*“As broad coverage as possible of the cap-and-trade system is vital; however, the inclusion of the rest of the economy emitters as part of a cap-and-trade system rather than a straightforward tax adds a level of complication.”*

**- Participant at May 2009 Outreach Session in Vancouver, British Columbia**

Concern was also expressed about the *federal government’s 2020 target*, summed up by one participant who said, “2020 is much closer than it was five years ago when these debates started, which poses challenging timeline issues.” There was no consensus, however, on whether the government’s 2020 and 2050 targets were too stringent or not stringent enough. Often in response to concerns raised by industry representatives that the targets and resulting carbon price to achieve the targets were too high, participants representing environmental organizations would respond that scientific evidence showed need for even greater reductions than current targets. They noted that it was important not to forget the potentially greater costs of inaction on climate change.

Also related to the government’s targets, participants at a number of sessions voiced concern that these targets were “out of touch” when compared with U.S. targets. Particularly related to the 2020 target, participants at a number of sessions said that in the absence of a global deal, it was optimistic for *Achieving 2050* to have a price on all emissions by 2020.

At all sessions, participants were asked whether it was preferable for Canada to wait for the U.S. to take action before implementing a Canada-wide cap-and-trade system or to take proactive action now.

Most participants strongly urged *Canada to move forward now*. As one participant said,

*“We will be saddled with something else if it (the federal government) does not develop policies within the context of Canadian challenges — Canada should move forward immediately if for no other reason than to protect our national interests.”*

**- Participant at May 2009 Outreach Session in Calgary, Alberta**

Related to this issue, one participant at the Ottawa session stated that “the worst scenario would be to line up with a U.S. trading system that is designed by Americans, for Americans, because Canadians will wind up sending money south.”

The issue of *carbon leakage* was raised at most sessions. The view of one participant at the Halifax session neatly captures the views of many: “There is no point in shutting down Nova Scotia coal plants and then importing coal-fired electricity from the U.S.” The issue of *U.S. action*, and a broader issue of carbon leakage to other countries, was prominent at each session. Comments such as, “Canada loses whenever we do something drastically different from the U.S.” were countered by statements such as, “We can’t just wait and see what the U.S. will do; it’s important to unify at home first — learning by doing — and better to have a national policy the U.S. can react to.”

At a number of sessions, participants suggested that *ensuring equity in carbon pricing* with the U.S. is one way to address these concerns. Also related to U.S. action were comments and questions about the NRTEE policy moving to full auction of emission permits by 2020. Participants at a number of sessions referred to the current draft of the U.S. Clean Energy and Security Act (Waxman-Markey), with its free allocation of 85% of permits, and felt that Canadian policy would need to reflect U.S. policy on this issue.

Across all sessions, strong support was given for the NRTEE’s recommendation to use auction revenue primarily for *technology deployment and innovation*. But some participants were skeptical that it would be used most effectively with the federal government managing and dispersing it. On the same issue, some participants suggested the need to highlight auctioning will not be phased in until 2015 and full auction not until 2020 in the NRTEE’s proposed policy. This led one participant to ask, “Where will the funding come from *now* for the necessary investment in clean technology to hit the targets?”

Related to the technology outcomes forecast as a result of a carbon price in *Achieving 2050*, participants at all sessions voiced concern with the “huge challenges of *electrification* as forecast by

the NRTEE in its scenarios.” Participants felt it important that the federal government understand that coordinated, considered effort will have to be paid in ensuring capacity to meet electricity demands under carbon pricing. Electricity regulators at various sessions, but particularly at the Ottawa and Montreal sessions, stressed that the current federal policy acted as an impediment against the necessary “price shock” to transition the current energy system to an electrified economy.

At a majority of meetings, participants questioned whether the NRTEE’s assumptions on the deployment of *carbon capture and storage* (CCS) were likely “overly optimistic.” They noted that significant challenges remain in the development and deployment of the technology and that its cost would likely be a challenge moving forward. Also related to the technology scenario forecast in *Achieving 2050*, a participant at the Calgary session said that the electrification of the economy as the result of carbon pricing would make coal with CCS too expensive and “likely shut electricity plants down.”

At both the Montreal and Halifax sessions, representatives of one industry sector were concerned they were not going to receive sufficient *credit for early action* to reduce emissions within the proposed Federal Regulatory Framework and a future Canada-wide cap-and-trade system. While participants at each session supported the inclusion of access to international carbon abatement opportunities in the NRTEE’s carbon pricing policy, it was suggested a number of times that if cost effectiveness was really the goal of the policy, international purchases should not be limited to 20% in 2020, as the costs of abatement in Canada “are significantly higher than in other countries.”

The issue of *wealth transfer related to auction revenue* received considerable attention at all sessions — in moving forward, there needs to be strong commitment from the federal government to work with the provinces on this issue. Related to this, a common statement at many sessions, as voiced by one participant, was that “each jurisdiction is different, with different profiles. In Canada and the United States there is a strong desire for local control of many aspects such as allocation and revenue sharing.” Also on the issue of auction revenue, a participant pointed out that as “provinces have the right on the electricity side to implement much of the carbon pricing policy, then at least half of the revenue belongs to the provinces.” As suggested by another participant, “constitutional challenges could be avoided if the federal government were to give revenue to the provinces on a per capita basis.”

On the issue of *implementation of a cap-and-trade system in Canada*, a participant at the Ottawa session recommended that with the transition of provincial systems to a unified national policy, consideration should be given to linking the system first on a pilot basis and then “going live at a

certain point all at once,” which could be less disruptive. A participant in Halifax noted the risk if provinces were to debate whose model was right and predicted that this debate could continue for years. Instead, the federal government must “pragmatically impose a system that can convince trading partners that our scheme is viable with theirs to avoid border adjustment issues.”

At all sessions, there was strong support for the report’s focus on *governance*. Participants said it was important for the federal government to develop new climate policy governance mechanisms at the national level. During discussions on governance, common examples of independent authorities that could be potential models for new federal institutions included the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, the Canada Revenue Agency, and Statistics Canada. At sessions in provinces that are members of regional carbon pricing regimes (e.g., the Western Climate Initiative [WCI] and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative), participants felt these systems could be very useful models for governance given the complexity of implementing a cap-and-trade system. In developing and implementing a unified carbon pricing policy in Canada, one participant summed up a common opinion that “there needs to be flexibility in choosing instruments without causing fragmentation.” Another participant pursued this view even further by recommending the NRTEE “go to the Minister and state clearly what the provinces are telling the NRTEE and what its thoughts are on the necessary political compromises. This conversation is not taking place in an open and transparent manner.”



## CHAPTER THREE

# COMMENTS FROM SPECIFIC SESSIONS ON *ACHIEVING 2050*

## VANCOUVER

At the Vancouver session, beyond broad support of the report's recommendations and main messages, there was even stronger support of the report's messages of urgency and the need to take immediate action. Participants felt that it would be useful for the federal government to take the report's messages and position itself to be "aggressive and positive" in the design and implementation of a carbon pricing policy for Canada. Also strongly voiced by participants at this session was a caution to the federal government against "playing to the lowest denominator" when unifying provincial action. On the same issue, participants said that when unifying toward a national carbon price and cap-and-trade system, existing provincial targets that are already in line with international targets need to be taken into account. A participant with first-hand knowledge of the Australian experience in moving toward a national, unified carbon pricing policy suggested more work was needed in Canada on smoothly transitioning Canadian provinces to a unified approach.

## TORONTO

On the issue of price and emissions certainty, a Toronto participant stated that while industry is concerned about certainty, the provinces are concerned about the transfer of wealth. At the same session, to build on the cap-and-trade implementation road map in the report, some participants suggested that specific benchmarks should be established along the transition from allocation to full

auction. Given the sheer volume of commercial buildings in Ontario, one participant stressed the importance of complementary regulations for buildings as recommended in *Achieving 2050*; that the cap-and-trade system “wedge” in the report not “overshadow” the attention that should be paid to emission reduction opportunities in this sector.

On the issue of governance, participants voiced concern about political interference, suggesting that the process of reviewing targets, carbon budgets, and other mechanisms needed to be separate from “elections and political processes.” One participant suggested the office of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario as a good role model.

## OTTAWA

Unique to the Ottawa session was a presentation from Sustainable Prosperity, the session co-host, on its “report card” of proposed and implemented carbon pricing policies in Canada, based on eight key principles for effective carbon pricing that are very similar to the principles laid out in *Achieving 2050*. The NRTEE’s proposed policy tied with B.C.’s plan for first place. According to Sustainable Prosperity, one issue with the NRTEE’s proposal is the administrative complexity of implementing and administering a cap-and-trade system versus a carbon tax.

Also at this session, some participants argued that it was not in the U.S.’s interest to have a unified carbon market with Canada — that the rate of emissions growth in Canada is significantly higher than in the U.S. — and thus one can expect Canada to have a higher carbon price. Participants at the same session also expressed concern with the impact of specific proposed U.S. protectionist measures such as border carbon adjustments.

On the gradual phase-out of domestic offsets in *Achieving 2050*, one participant at the Ottawa session said it would be a good idea to announce ahead of time that as many sectors as possible will move from an offset system to a cap-and-trade system. In particular, it was suggested that this transition can be a trial period, much like the U.S. cap-and-trade system for Acid Rain.

Another participant noted that the meeting was only a first step to dealing with the current patchwork of fragmented policies across Canada — that the NRTEE or other institutions should build on these sessions for a continued and informed national public dialogue. Related to the issue of unifying policy, a participant cautioned the NRTEE that “the provinces all support a unified system as long as it is similar to theirs.”

An industry representative pointed out the need to consider how proposed carbon-intensive projects with significant economic importance will survive in a carbon-constrained future.

## MONTREAL

A clearly different approach to carbon pricing in Canada than the NRTEE's unified approach was put forward at the Montreal session. It was suggested that a sectoral approach would be preferable to a uniform national approach as it would result in a "flexible, adaptive policy that acknowledges the unique nature of each industrial sector."

An issue particular to Quebec that was raised at the session relates to the electricity sector – that the sector has already reduced emissions by 97%, producing less than one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per gigawatt-hour. As one participant said: "The effort to go to zero would be enormous". Other participants felt that given the simplicity of implementing a carbon tax, the NRTEE should have given it greater consideration in its choice of a cap-and-trade system. As one participant said: "I am surprised about your (the NRTEE's) position to so quickly jump to a cap-and-trade system."

## HALIFAX

At the Halifax session, a number of participants stressed the importance for quick action and noted that in the Atlantic region, discussions on cap-and-trade "always focus on exemptions and risks to the region, rather than the cost of inaction."

A unique issue with carbon leakage was raised in Halifax. A participant pointed out that "many companies operating in Atlantic Canada are subsidiaries of companies not headquartered here," and there was a concern that if a cap-and-trade system were implemented, a response would be through inter-region and intra-company transfers, such as those between different subsidiaries and branches of a company located in multiple provinces or countries. Another issue raised at the same session was that in some Atlantic provinces, energy accounts for 90% of GHG emissions and that "energy does not recognize nor is concerned with jurisdiction." The northeast of North America is a massive energy market that the NRTEE's proposed cap-and-trade system might have difficulty affecting from a purely Canadian regulatory outlook.

Another issue with carbon pricing raised at the Halifax session was a concern that consumers in less wealthy regions, like New Brunswick, would see the same electricity prices as elsewhere, adding to issues of inequity. Building on the issue of regional difference, another participant recommended the federal environment minister meet with his CCME colleagues to understand regional nuances and differences in moving toward a national cap-and-trade system. In particular, as voiced by another participant, "some jurisdictions — from small towns to provinces — are finding it difficult to deal with increasingly complex regulatory frameworks."



## CHAPTER FOUR

# COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *ACHIEVING 2050*

While all sessions started with a discussion on *Achieving 2050*, sessions in Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal also devoted time to discussing each recommendation of the report separately. The findings below relating to each recommendation are associated with these sessions, while the comments in the previous section encompass the main views and opinions of participants from all sessions.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### **Unify carbon policies and prices across emissions and jurisdictions based on three principal policy elements:**

- an economy-wide cap-and-trade system transitioned from current and planned federal, provincial, and territorial initiatives;
- complementary regulations and technology policies in the transportation, buildings, oil and gas, and agricultural sectors; and
- international carbon abatement opportunities that are credible, affordable, and sustainable.

## Discussion

At all sessions there was strong support for the NRTEE's recommendation of a unified carbon price based on a cap-and-trade system with as broad, economy-wide coverage (e.g., large emitters and rest of economy emissions) as possible.

At the Vancouver session, participants said that more discussion with the federal government was needed on coverage. For example, some participants pointed out that other systems (e.g., WCI) were moving toward the inclusion of the transportation and buildings sectors under a cap-and-trade system, whereas the NRTEE's recommended policy covers transportation and building sector emissions through complementary regulations.

At the Calgary session, some participants commented that the inclusion of fuel distributors in a cap-and-trade system added a level of complexity, that is, it would be necessary to design an exemption to avoid a "double carbon hit" for large emitters. One participant suggested a way to address this issue could be to place a cap on specific areas, such as hydrocarbon use. There was some disagreement at the same session on the NRTEE's gradual phase-out of domestic offsets with one participant stating that offsets will ultimately be monitored by the WTO and WCI.

This sentiment was echoed at the Montreal session, with some participants arguing that the treatment of domestic offsets deserved a more in-depth discussion and Canada should delay elimination of offsets until all possible tools are available. However, in response, one participant stated that domestic offsets "complicate an already complicated system" and supported the NRTEE's proposed phase-out.

Also at the Montreal session, a participant said that the electricity sector should receive permits for free, instead of through auction, as he believed the sector was already penalized compared to other sectors. Another participant urged the federal government to involve municipalities in the development of a national cap-and-trade system as they would be able to ensure adoption of low-carbon technologies, especially with buildings.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**Ensure the unified Canadian carbon pricing policy can link with current and proposed international systems and, most particularly, with a prospective trading regime likely to emerge in the United States, to ensure compatibility in pricing and action.**

### Discussion

Four issues were common across sessions in relation to Recommendation 2:

- There was strong support for designing a system that could eventually link with the U.S.
- There was strong support to “just get started” — to implement an adaptive policy like the NRTEE’s “so we can learn by doing, but also adjust the policy later on so as not to put ourselves at a competitive disadvantage.”
- Participants strongly voiced concern with waiting for a U.S. system before Canada acts.
- While strong support was provided at all sessions on the report’s message of “acting now,” some participants also pointed to a need to identify barriers to “smart progress” so that the goals of the policy could be achieved as quickly as possible.

At the Vancouver session, some participants said that the outcome of a unified system should not be linkage, but a similar “competitive context,” which is brought about by having a comparable price between jurisdictions. While there was strong support for striving toward linkage with the U.S. at the Calgary session, participants also made it clear that “we should not be constrained by U.S. and other competitors’ policies in getting started with a policy best suited to Canada’s interests.” At the same session, one participant commented that a domestic technology fund would be a better option than the NRTEE’s policy of limited access to international credits. Another participant noted that in regard to timing issues, the Canadian unified carbon price would have to move closer to a U.S. price, not vice versa. Lastly, at the Montreal session, one participant said supply and demand would determine the carbon price and that the federal government’s role is to reduce the difference between the domestic carbon price and the international price.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

**Use generated revenue from permit auctions first and foremost, to invest in the required technologies and innovation needed to meet the Canadian environmental goal of reduced GHG emissions.**

### Discussion

At all sessions, there was strong support for the NRTEE's recommendation to invest the revenue from auction in technology innovation and deployment. As one participant said, "this is the most important step to get up the steep ramp toward change."

At the Vancouver session, one participant noted that the use of auction revenue should be applied more broadly than to technology, arguing that all revenues be put toward the most cost-effective methods of reducing emissions. This view was echoed by a participant at the Montreal session, who said that auction revenues should be used beyond technological investment and should address behavioural change and new approaches to development.

Also at the Vancouver session, participants said that for trade-exposed sectors, clear rules about eligibility and about how revenues will address the most-affected sectors need to be in place. In particular, as one participant noted, "the forestry industry is hugely important in B.C. and the [federal] government needs to ensure assistance is provided if the sector is put at a disadvantage to competitors in a cap-and-trade system."

A participant at the Calgary session said that the price signal was sufficient to stimulate technology development and deployment — that additional funds from auction revenue might not be necessary. Another participant at the same session said that the level of free allocation versus auction in a Canadian system would be closely aligned with other systems and that full auction would be unlikely in other systems by 2020. Therefore, the amount of revenue projected in the NRTEE's policy for 2020 was unrealistic. The same participant explained that a technology focus should be short term as certain technologies will need "massive funds to get deployed initially, but this should taper out over time."

Participants in Montreal commented that investment should not be limited to one type of technology, as some are almost market ready and just require “a little push,” while others (e.g., high-speed trains) will require major public investment. One participant said that a sectoral approach to technology is important because one size does not fit all. Another stressed the importance of viewing technology and technological investment in a global context, and not just through a domestic lens. For example, what technologies can Canada develop and sell abroad? A third participant at the Montreal session noted that by the time revenues are available, industry will have made the major investments needed.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

**Transition the current fragmented approach to carbon pricing across jurisdictions and emissions to a unified canadian carbon pricing regime as soon as possible, and no later than 2015.**

### Discussion

While there was no clear consensus on timing and implementation across sessions, there was broad support for taking action “sooner rather than later.” At the Vancouver session, for example, there was unanimous support for unification but sooner than 2015. In contrast, a number of participants at the Calgary session argued that 2015 “might be too soon for harmonization because of the cycles of capital stock turnover ... [but] that we should aim to be in the throes of harmonization by 2015.” Another participant at the Calgary session said the current climate policy situation in Canada was “completely fragmented” and doubted that regional differences and interests could come together so quickly. However, another participant at the same session pointed out that if the EU Emission Trading Scheme with 21 member countries could agree on a common approach, then “10 provinces in Canada could do the same.”

At the Montreal session, a participant said that rather than a unified price, the focus should be on a unified structure. At the same session, participants supported the need for a unified price, but said that provinces like Ontario and Quebec, which are already taking action through the WCI, should not wait for federal action.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

**Establish a dedicated carbon pricing governance framework based on adaptive policy principles to develop, implement, and manage the unified carbon pricing regime over time with the following elements:**

- federal/provincial/territorial collaboration through an ongoing forum;
- an expert Carbon Pricing and Revenue Authority with a regulatory mandate; and
- an independent, expert advisory body to provide regular and timely advice to government.

### Discussion

Participants at all sessions strongly supported the need for new governance structures to implement and manage an adaptive carbon pricing policy in Canada. Participants at all sessions also voiced the need to have provincial representation on national climate policy oversight bodies (such as the NRTEE's recommended Carbon Pricing and Revenue Authority) to ensure transparency and provincial/territorial buy-in. As well, participants across the country stressed the importance of using clear communications when talking to Canadians. As one participant pointed out, "dollar per tonne figures cause fear."

At the Vancouver session, a participant warned against "getting bogged down in setting up structures," noting instead that a simple, elegant system was best. At the Calgary session, a participant commented that this recommendation was a challenge because of "silo-ing, political cycle, sovereignty." Another participant at the same session urged that the implementation of a unified cap-and-trade system not be "a massive economic management process.... Putting controls around it will be tough, but we don't want central planning either." As suggested by another participant in Calgary: "Set the goals, and we'll adjust as we go."

One participant at the Calgary session pointed out that provinces such as B.C., Alberta, and Ontario are establishing climate change secretariats and provide good examples of "structure and authority driving the process." At the same session, another participant said that for governance, the federal government needs to address "a lack of leadership and expertise due to a lack of appropriately skilled human resources" in Canada. A Calgary participant recommended using the Alberta system as a template for a national system as it has proven to be a useful example of how companies and government can work together. There is an "outlet for difficult situations, such as the cap and the technology fund." However, another participant cautioned that what Canada does internally will not succeed if the country cannot link internationally.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# CONCLUSION

The *Achieving 2050* outreach meetings provided a neutral space for frank and open dialogue with an extensive range of regional stakeholders. There was clear appetite for engagement on the part of participants and a desire for continued discussion as the federal government moves forward in the design and implementation of a cap-and-trade system for Canada. While convergence of views with the NRTEE's proposed carbon pricing policy varied across Canada, participants strongly supported certain areas of common agreement and understanding at all sessions. They include —

- an economy-wide carbon pricing policy with the greatest breadth of coverage possible;
- the carbon pricing policy in *Achieving 2050*, along with the research and analysis underpinning the main findings and recommendations;
- *Achieving 2050's* cap-and-trade implementation road map, which was seen as a logical, sequenced approach to implementing an adaptive policy that minimizes risks;
- *Achieving 2050's* message of taking action now, rather than delaying;
- a move from the current fragmentation of carbon prices and policies across Canada to a unified, national approach;
- the report's recommendation to send a carbon price signal that is certain and credible now while being able to adapt to changing circumstances over time;
- a cap-and-trade system that can eventually link with a U.S. system;
- the use of auction revenue first and foremost for technology deployment and innovation; and
- the report's recommendations concerning new governance institutions.

As well, participants across all sessions wanted the federal government to be aware of some issues of concern:

- Implementing a cap-and-trade system could put Canadian firms at a competitive disadvantage to U.S. firms: from proposed U.S. protectionist measures in draft climate legislation, carbon leakage, and greater auction of permits in Canada than the U.S.
- The energy system could lack the necessary capacity to meet the demands of electrification as a result of carbon pricing.

Issues of common *agreement* unique to specific sessions included the following:

- At the *Vancouver* session, participants strongly urged the federal government to implement a unified carbon pricing policy with the greatest breadth of coverage as soon as possible and strongly cautioned against delay.
- At the *Calgary* session, there was concern from a range of sector representatives about the gradual phase-out of domestic offsets in the NRTEE's policy.
- Also at the *Calgary* session, there was support for the inclusion of a technology fund (similar to the fund currently in place in Alberta) in a national cap-and-trade system rather than access to international carbon abatement opportunities.
- At the *Ottawa* session, it was noted that the meeting was only a first step to dealing with the current patchwork of fragmented policies across Canada — that the NRTEE or other institutions should build on these sessions for a continued and informed national public dialogue.
- Participants at the *Montreal* session stressed that the current federal policy acted as an impediment against the necessary “price shock” to transition the current energy system to an electrified economy.
- At the *Halifax* session, participants voiced their concern about the potential impact of a carbon price on households and rural communities and noted that the federal government would need to ensure that vulnerable households and communities would receive appropriate assistance to minimize any adverse impacts.

The most common area of *divergence* among participants from all sessions related to the stringency of the federal government's 2020 and 2050 targets. Views ranged from a potential strain on the Canadian economy by attempting to reach the targets, to putting the environment and economy at risk by taking less stringent action on climate change.

## APPENDIX A: OUTREACH SESSIONS

### May 13, 2009: Calgary, Alberta

Co-hosted with Climate Change Central  
[www.climatechangecentral.com](http://www.climatechangecentral.com)



### May 14, 2009: Vancouver, British Columbia

Co-hosted with Fraser Basin Council  
[www.fraserbasin.bc.ca](http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca)



### May 19, 2009: Toronto, Ontario

Co-hosted with Association of Power Producers of Ontario  
[www.appro.org](http://www.appro.org)



### May 20, 2009: Ottawa, Ontario

Co-hosted with Sustainable Prosperity  
[www.sustainableprosperity.ca](http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca)



### May 21, 2009: Montreal, Quebec

Co-hosted with Le Conseil patronal de l'environnement du Québec  
[www.cpeq.org](http://www.cpeq.org)



### July 16, 2009: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Co-hosted with Atlantic Provinces Economic Council  
[www.apec-econ.ca](http://www.apec-econ.ca)



## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS

Note: As the *Achieving 2050 Outreach Sessions* took place in the spring and summer of 2009, some participants' titles and organizations might have changed. Information that appears below reflects that of the participants at the time of these meetings.

### May 13, 2009: Calgary, Alberta

**Bob Page**

NRTEE Chair  
TransAlta Professor  
Environmental Management and Sustainability  
Institute for Sustainable Energy,  
Environment and Economy  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, AB

**Richard Boyd**

Policy Analyst  
Climate Change Central  
Calgary, AB

**Oliver Bussler**

Manager  
Commercial Environment  
EPCOR Utilities Inc.  
Calgary, AB

**Claude Chamberland**

Manager  
Industry and Government Affairs  
Oil Sands Downstream  
Shell Canada Energy  
Calgary, AB

**William R. Clapperton**

Vice-President  
Regulatory, Stakeholder and Environmental  
Affairs  
Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.  
Calgary, AB

**Daniel Collins**

Senior Business Advisor  
Carbon Credits and Offsets  
Petro-Canada  
Calgary, AB

**Keith Driver**

Vice-President of Operations  
Bluesource  
Calgary, AB

**Brian Gilbertson**

Manager  
Government Relations  
Agrium Inc.  
Calgary, AB

**Karen Haugen-Kozyra**

Director  
Policy Development and Offset Solutions  
Climate Change Central  
Edmonton, AB

**Gary Holden**

President and CEO  
Enmax  
Calgary, AB

**J.A. (Jim) Hughes**

Manager  
Energy Analysis  
Imperial Oil Ltd.  
Calgary, AB

**Rick Hyndman**

Senior Policy Advisor  
Climate Change  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers  
Calgary, AB

**Tony Irwin**

Manager  
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency  
Spectra Energy Transmission  
Vancouver, BC

**John Kenney**

Environmental Tools Advisor  
Policy and Systems Design  
Alberta Environment  
Edmonton, AB

**Alex Long**

Senior Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Bruce Love**

Director  
Preferred Carbon  
Calgary, AB

**Don MacDonald**

Director  
Marketing and Business Development  
Viterra  
Calgary, AB

**Nathan Maycher**

Senior Manager  
Sustainable Development  
TransAlta Corporation  
Calgary, AB

**Patricia McCunn-Miller**

Board Member  
Climate Change Central  
Calgary, AB

**David McLaughlin**

President and CEO  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Bob Mitchell**

Manager  
Climate Change, Business Development and  
Strategic Planning  
ConocoPhillips Canada  
Calgary, AB

**Jon Mitchell**

Lead  
Environmental Policy and Strategy  
EnCana Corporation  
Calgary, AB

**Greg Moffatt**

Director  
Environmental Regulation  
TransCanada  
Calgary, AB

**Randeep Nota**

Environmental Specialist  
Environmental and Climate Change Policy  
The City of Calgary  
Calgary, AB

**Liz Quarshie**

Deputy Minister  
Saskatchewan Environment  
Regina, SK

**Andy Ridge**

Business Unit Leader  
Climate Change Policy  
Alberta Environment  
Edmonton, AB

**John Rilett**

Vice-President  
Climate Change Central  
Calgary, AB

**Rob Saik**

President  
Agri Trend Agrology  
Red Deer, AB

**Dave Sawyer**

Principal  
EnviroEconomics  
Ottawa, ON

**Dave Schwass**

Senior Advisor  
Environment  
NOVA Chemicals Research and  
Technology Centre  
Calgary, AB

**John Skowronski**

Director  
Environmental Affairs  
Canadian Petroleum Products Institute  
Calgary, AB

**Tim Stobbs**

Emissions Planning Engineer  
SaskPower  
Regina, SK

**Neil Symington**

Senior Climate Change Advisor  
Sustainable Development  
Suncor Energy Inc.  
Calgary, AB

**Bill Tubbs**

Specialist  
Climate Change and Energy Efficiency  
Spectra Energy Transmission  
Vancouver, BC

**Paul Vickers**

Managing Director  
Natsource Asset Management Corp.  
Calgary, AB

**Debra Walsh**

Senior Advisor  
Government and Regulatory Affairs  
Policy, Government and Public Affairs  
Chevron Canada Resources  
Calgary, AB

**Lisa Ward**

Fuel and Quality Compliance Specialist  
Husky Energy  
Calgary, AB

**Ed Whittingham**

Group Director  
Consulting Services  
Pembina Institute  
Calgary, AB

**Allen Wright**

President and CEO  
The Coal Association of Canada  
Calgary, AB

**Ziad Saad**

Director of Operations  
Canadian Energy Pipelines Association  
Calgary, AB

---

**May 14, 2009: Vancouver,  
British Columbia****Janet Benjamin**

NRTEE Member  
President  
Vireo Technologies Inc.  
North Vancouver, BC

**Dale Beugin**

Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Stephanie Cairns**

Project Director  
Carbon Pricing  
Sustainable Prosperity  
Victoria, BC

**Katherine Cheng**

Project Manager  
Environment and Energy Division  
Levelton Consultants Ltd.  
Richmond, BC

**Mark Edwards**

Director  
Environment and Corporate Affairs  
Teck Resources Ltd.  
Vancouver, BC

**Robert W. Falls**

Chief Executive Officer  
ERA Ecosystem Restoration Associates Inc.  
North Vancouver, BC

**Meg Fricke**

Manager  
Climate Change and Sustainability Services  
Ernst & Young LLP  
Vancouver, BC

**Karen Graham**

Senior Policy Analyst  
Business Council of British Columbia  
Vancouver, BC

**Michael Harcourt**

Advisor  
Sustainability Solutions  
Former Premier of BC  
Vancouver, BC

**Matt Horne**

Acting Director  
B.C. Energy Solutions  
Pembina Institute  
Vancouver, BC

**Charles Jago**

Chair  
Fraser Basin Council  
Vancouver, BC

**Al Kleinschmidt**

Principal  
Boreas Consulting  
Vancouver, BC

**Tim Lesiuk**

Executive Director  
Climate Change Policy  
Office of the Premier  
Climate Action Secretariat  
Vancouver, BC

**Alex Long**

Senior Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Michael Margolick**

Vice President  
Power and Transmission Planning  
Naikun Wind Development Inc.  
Vancouver, BC

**Morgan McDonald**

Director  
Sourcing Offsetters  
Vancouver, BC

**Ken McKinnon**

NRTEE Member  
Chair  
Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic  
Assessment Board  
Whitehorse, YT

**Richard Prokopanko**

NRTEE Member  
Director  
Government Relations  
Rio Tinto Alcan Inc.  
Vancouver, BC

**Bob Purdy**

Director  
Corporate Development and  
Communications  
Fraser Basin Council  
Vancouver, BC

**Tom Whelan**

Partner  
Canadian Mining Industry Lead  
Ernst & Young  
Vancouver, BC

**Peter Wynne**

Technical Services Manager  
Burnaby Refinery  
Chevron Canada Limited  
Burnaby, BC

**May 19, 2009: Toronto, Ontario****Thomas Brett**

Partner  
Fogler, Rubinoff LLP  
Toronto, ON

**Derek Burleton**

Director of Economic Analysis  
TD Bank Financial Group  
Toronto, ON

**David Butters**

President  
Association of Power Producers of Ontario  
Toronto, ON

**Robert Cary**

President  
Robert Cary and Associates Inc.  
St. Catharines, ON

**Ben Dachis**

Policy Analyst  
C.D. Howe Institute  
Toronto, ON

**Julie Desjardins**

Consultant  
Desjardins and Associates  
Mississauga, ON

**Ken Elsey**

President and CEO  
Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance  
Mississauga, ON

**Alex Long**

Senior Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Maria Mavroyannis**

Practitioner  
Deloitte LLP  
Toronto, ON

**David McLaughlin**

President and CEO  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Paul McMillan**

Senior Vice President  
EPCOR Ontario  
Toronto, ON

**Bob Oliver**

Executive Director  
Pollution Probe  
Toronto, ON

**George Pessione**

Senior Planner  
Power System Planning  
Ontario Power Authority  
Toronto, ON

**Peter Sergejewich**

Director  
Corporate Planning  
Independent Electricity System Operator  
Toronto, ON

**Stephen Somerville**

Director  
Competitive Power Ventures  
Aurora, ON

**Ralph Torrie**

Managing Director  
Navigant Consulting, Inc.  
Toronto, ON

**Jennifer Xu**

Risk Analyst  
Bruce Power  
Toronto, ON

**May 20, 2009: Ottawa, Ontario****Bob Page**

NRTEE Chair  
TransAlta Professor  
Environmental Management and Sustainability  
Institute for Sustainable Energy,  
Environment and Economy  
University of Calgary  
Calgary, AB

**Aled Ab Iorwerth**

Chief  
Microanalysis  
Finance Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**George Anderson**

President and CEO  
Forum of Federations  
Ottawa, ON

**John Appleby**

Chief  
End-Use Market Analysis  
Natural Resources Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Dale Beugin**

Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Pierre Boucher**

President and CEO  
Cement Association of Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Matthew Bramley**

Director  
Climate Change  
Pembina Institute  
Gatineau, QC

**Scott Campbell**

Director  
Environment and Energy Policy  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce  
Toronto, ON

**Margaret Chase**

Economist  
Current Analysis and Modelling  
Environment Canada  
Gatineau, QC

**David Chernushenko**

NRTEE Vice-Chair  
President  
Green and Gold Inc.  
Ottawa, ON

**Nancy Coulas**

Director  
Environmental Policy  
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters  
Ottawa, ON

**Tom Courchene**

Professor and Director  
School of Policy Studies  
Queen's University  
Kingston, ON

**John R. Dillon**

Vice-President  
Regulatory Affairs and General Counsel  
Canadian Council of Chief Executives  
Ottawa, ON

**Sandra Duarte**

Manager  
Prosperity and Climate Change  
British High Commission  
Ottawa, ON

**Bruce Dudley**

Senior Vice-President  
Delphi Group  
Ottawa, ON

**Carmen L Dybwad**

Vice-President  
Business Development and External Relations  
Canadian Energy Research Institute  
Calgary, AB

**Stewart Elgie**

Associate Director and Professor  
Sustainable Prosperity  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, ON

**Brian Emmett**

Principal  
Sussex Circle  
Ottawa, ON

**Jimena Eyzaguirre**

Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Pierre Guimond**

President and CEO  
Canadian Electricity Association  
Ottawa, ON

**Stephen Hazell**

Executive Director  
Sierra Club  
Ottawa, ON

**Colin Hunt**

Director  
Research and Publications  
Natural Resources Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Paul Lansbergen**

Director  
Taxation and Business Issues  
Forest Products Association of Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Michael Lister**

Deputy Director  
Public Policy Forum  
Ottawa, ON

**Alex Long**

Senior Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Tony Macerollo**

Vice-President  
Public and Government Affairs  
Canadian Petroleum Products Institute  
Ottawa, ON

**Alfred A. MacLeod**

Assistant Deputy Minister  
Intergovernmental Policy  
Privy Council Office  
Ottawa, ON

**Robert Masterson**

Director  
Industry Policy  
Cement Association of Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Will McDowall**

Research Associate  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**David McLaughlin**

President and CEO  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Isabel Metcalfe**

Public Affairs Counsel  
Canadian Solar Industries Association  
Ottawa, ON

**Deborah Murphy**

Associate  
Climate Change and Energy  
International Institute for Sustainable  
Development  
Ottawa, ON

**Jayson Myers**

President and Chief Economist  
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters  
Ottawa, ON

**Yves Poisson**

Vice-President  
Public Policy Forum  
Ottawa, ON

**Pierre Sadik**

Senior Policy Advisor  
David Suzuki Foundation  
Ottawa, ON

**Carl A. Sonnen**

President  
Informetrica Ltd.  
Ottawa, ON

**Annika Tamlyn**

Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Patrick Taylor**

Census of Agriculture  
Statistics Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Andrew Van Iterson**

Program Manager  
Green Budget Coalition  
Ottawa, ON

**Ron Watkins**

President  
Canadian Steel Producers' Association  
Ottawa, ON

**David B. Watters**

President  
Global Advantage Consulting Group Inc.  
Ottawa, ON

**Elizabeth Weir**

President and CEO  
Energy Efficiency New Brunswick  
Ottawa, ON

**Alexander Wood**

Interim Research Director  
Sustainable Prosperity  
Ottawa, ON

**May 21, 2009: Montreal, Quebec****Pierre Alarie**

President  
Pierre Alarie Consultants Inc.  
Montreal, QC

**Philippe Alary-Paquette**

Analyst  
Climate Change  
Stabilis  
Montreal, QC

**JB Allard**

Director  
Government Affairs  
Sustainable Development and Marketing  
Montreal, QC

**Luc Baillargeon**

Senior Environmental Advisor  
Petro-Canada  
Montreal, QC

**Jean-Thomas Bernard**

Chair  
Economic Power  
Laval University  
Quebec, QC

**Michel Bourbonnière**

Chief  
Performance and Compliance  
Environment and Sustainable Development  
Société de transport de Montréal  
Montreal, QC

**Mark Brooks**

Climate Change Project Manager  
ÉcoRessources Consultants  
Montreal, QC

**Alain Brophy**

Lawyer  
Deveau, Bourgeois, Gagné, Hébert & associés,  
s.e.n.c.r.l.  
Laval, QC

**Anne Frédérique Bourret**

Barrister & Solicitors Patent and Trade-mark  
Agents  
Ogilvy Renault LLP  
Montreal, QC

**Pierre Chaput**

Director  
Sustainable Development, Health and Safety  
Aluminum Association of Canada  
Montreal, QC

**Marie-Ève Chaume**

Environmental Affairs  
Quebecor World Inc.  
Montreal, QC

**René Drolet**

Director  
Policy and Research  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Robert Dubé**

NRTEE Member  
President  
ATOOUT Personnel  
Montreal, QC

**Thomas Duchaine**

Project Manager  
Climate Change  
Équiterre  
Montreal, QC

**Simon Gaboury**

Advisor  
Climate Change  
SSE, Primary Metals, North America  
Rio Tinto Alcan  
Montreal, QC

**Caroline Gélinault**

Strategic Planning and Government Affairs  
Hydro-Québec  
Montreal, QC

**Christopher Green**

Professor  
Department of Economics  
McGill University  
Montreal, QC

**Martin Kelly**

Executive Director  
Montreal Office  
Golder Associés Ltée  
Montreal, QC

**Hélène Lauzon**

President  
Conseil Patronal de l'Environnement  
du Québec  
Montreal, QC

**Sonia Léonard**

Manager  
Environmental Affairs and Remediation  
Ultramar  
Montreal, QC

**Alex Long**

Senior Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Paul MacLean**

President  
EEM Inc.  
Montreal, QC

**Ann McCarthy**

Vice President  
Business Development  
Montreal Climate Exchange  
Montreal, QC

**Rina P. McGuire**

President  
Louiseville Specialty Products Inc.  
Louiseville, QC

**Carol Montreuil**

Vice-President  
Eastern Canada  
Canadian Petroleum Products Association  
Anjou, QC

**Johanne Pichette**

Director  
Responsible Investments  
The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec  
Montreal, QC

**Claude Pigeon**

Vice-President  
Cement Association of Canada  
Montreal, QC

**Anne-Marie Sheahan**

Partner  
McCarthy Tétrault  
Montreal, QC

**Laurie Talluto**

Environmental Advisor  
La Coop fédérée  
Montreal, QC

**Jocelyn Théberge**

Director  
Conestoga-Rovers and Associates (Quebec) Inc.  
Montreal, QC

**July 16, 2009: Halifax, Nova Scotia****Elizabeth Beale**

President and CEO  
Atlantic Provinces Economic Council  
Halifax, NS

**Zoë Caron**

Eco-Efficiency Centre  
Dalhousie University  
Halifax, NS

**Raymond Côté**

Member  
Nova Scotia Round Table on Environment and  
Sustainable Prosperity  
Halifax, NS

**Neil Craik**

Associate Professor  
Centre for Environment and Business  
School of Environment  
Enterprise and Development (SEED)  
University of Waterloo  
Waterloo, ON

**Allan Crandlemire**

Executive Director  
Conserve Nova Scotia  
Halifax, NS

**Gerald Crane**

Director  
Partnership Research and Analysis  
Executive Council Rural Secretariat  
Government of Newfoundland & Labrador  
St. John's, NL

**George Foote**

Director  
Climate Change Directorate  
Government of Nova Scotia  
Halifax, NS

**Robert Grant**

Partner  
Stewart McKelvey  
Halifax, NS

**Stephen Hawboldt**

Executive Director  
Clean Annapolis River Project  
Annapolis Royal, NS

**Jason Hollett**

Energy Development Officer  
Climate Change Directorate  
Government of Nova Scotia  
Halifax, NS

**John S. Hughes**

Director  
Special Projects  
Prince Edward Island Environment,  
Energy and Forestry  
Charlottetown, PE

**Larry Hughes**

Department of Electrical and  
Computer Engineering  
Dalhousie University  
Halifax, NS

**Neil Jacobsen**

Assistant Deputy Minister  
Alternative Energy and Market Development  
New Brunswick Department of Energy  
Saint John, NB

**Martin Janowitz**

Senior Vice-President  
Sustainability  
Jacques Whitford  
Dartmouth, NS

**Suzanne Ley**

Intergovernmental Affairs, Policy,  
Advocacy and Coordination Branch  
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency  
Halifax, NS

**Alex Long**

Senior Policy Advisor  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Tamara Lorincz**

Executive Director  
Nova Scotia Environmental Network  
Halifax, NS

**Leslie Malone**

Policy Associate  
Environment Northeast  
Charlottetown, PE

**Ross V. Matthews**

Manager  
Safety, Health and Environmental Performance  
Dartmouth Refinery  
Imperial Oil Limited  
Halifax, NS

**Robin McAdam**

Executive Vice President  
Sustainability  
Nova Scotia Power  
Halifax, NS

**David McLaughlin**

President and CEO  
NRTEE  
Ottawa, ON

**Robert Niven**

President  
Carbon Sense Solutions Inc.  
Halifax, NS

**Gina Patterson**

Managing Director  
Clean Nova Scotia  
Dartmouth, NS

**Cheryl Ratchford**

Energy Coordinator  
Ecology Action Centre  
Halifax, NS

**Bill Simpkins**

Atlantic Representative  
Canadian Petroleum Products Institute  
Halifax, NS

**John Woods**

Vice-President  
Energy Development  
Minas Basin Pulp and Power Company Ltd.  
Hantsport, NS

[WWW.NRTEE-TRNEE.CA](http://WWW.NRTEE-TRNEE.CA)