

Backgrounder: Climate Action Plan Facts

- Canada promised to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.
- New Brunswick has agreed to a regional goal of 35% to 45% below 1990 levels by 2030 (or an average of 40%). That regional goal represents an average of 6.5 million tonnes of reductions from New Brunswick that could go toward meeting our regional and national goal¹.
- 1 tonne of carbon dioxide would fill a sphere 10 metres in diameter; cutting our greenhouse gases by an average of 40% in less than 15 years is like shedding 6.5 million 10-metre spheres from our carbon diet. Achieving this goal can make us healthier and stimulate job creation.
- Globally, over 40 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide were emitted in 2014.² Several more billion tonnes in emissions came from other gases, like methane and nitrous oxide.
- In Canada, over 80% of the 732 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions that we generated in 2014 came from the energy we produce and use, about the same proportion as globally.³
- In New Brunswick, the proportion of our almost 15 million tonnes of emissions in 2014 from energy use was somewhat higher at about 90%.⁴
- We add the remaining 10 to 20% by cutting trees to make products or to grow food. This happens because through photosynthesis trees and plants absorb carbon dioxide when they grow and release it when they die or are disturbed. Rotting food in landfills and excess fertilizer use also add to the problem by releasing greenhouse gases called methane and nitrous oxide.
- The world's leading climate scientists are absolutely certain – as certain as 95 to 100% that humans are the primary cause of the pollution increasing global temperatures:

“Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by economic and population growth, and are now higher than ever. This has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Their effects, together with those of other anthropogenic drivers, have been detected throughout the climate system and are extremely likely (95 to 100%) to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Core Writing Team, Pachaur, & Meyer, 2014, p. 3).

¹ 1990 emissions in New Brunswick were 16.4 million tonnes; an average 40% reduction = 6.5 million tonnes

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Core Writing Team, Pachaur, R. K., & Meyer, L. A. (Eds.). (2014). *Climate change 2014 synthesis report: Summary for policymakers*. Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

³ Environment Canada. (2016). *National inventory report: Canada's greenhouse gas sources and sinks 1990 - 2014*. Ottawa; <https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/global.html>

⁴ <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/env/pdf/Climate-Climatiques/BuildingAStrongerResponseToClimateChange.pdf>