



We all have a part to play in solving climate change

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Climate change affects us all, but especially the poor, the old and the sick, even here in Canada and New Brunswick. It affects us whether we contribute a lot or a little to the problem.

In New Brunswick, the cost of post-tropical storm Arthur in 2014 exceeded \$12.5 million. Combined with damage costs from other flooding events since 2010, the cost to New Brunswickers over the last five years exceeded \$80 million. The cost of extreme weather will get worse unless serious action is taken to slow climate change.

The province estimates that the annual cost of damage to homes from coastal flooding due to climate change could reach \$730 to \$1,803 per New Brunswicker by 2050, higher than any of the other Atlantic Provinces, and five times higher than the Canadian average. Add climate change impacts to health from more hot days and disease-carrying insects such as ticks, and to forests from fires caused by drier conditions, and we can see how inaction risks our quality of life and our pocket books.

Climate change solutions are opportunities we can't afford to miss. German households, for example, pay an average monthly electricity bill of \$96.36, at a rate of 33.88 cents a kilowatt-hour and usage of 284.42 kilowatts. U.S. households pay an average of \$111.95 a month, at a rate of 11.88 cents per kilowatt-hour and usage of 942.33 kilowatts. The average U.S. rate is about the same in New Brunswick, but we use, on average, 17,000 kWh/year because we heat our homes with electricity. New Brunswickers pay more for electricity because low rates mean we do not invest as much as we should in energy efficiency and conservation as do countries in Europe.

Transitioning from coal, oil and gas to renewable energy is critical to solving climate change. New Brunswick needs to be part of the energy revolution to create jobs for the long-term. The International Renewable Energy Association reports renewable energy jobs in the United States increased 6% in 2015 while employment in the oil and gas sector decreased 18%. In China, renewable energy employed 3.5 million people, while oil and gas employed 2.6 million.

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick believes doing our part to solve climate change is the key to managing energy costs and creating jobs here at home. Our three-part action plan proposal covers electricity, provincial investments and government policy. Our electricity strategy accelerates investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, electric vehicles, and the Smart Grid to balance a

more distributed provincial and regional electricity system. These programs would allow the province to phase out the use of coal to generate electricity as Ontario has done and Alberta will do by 2030. The provincial investment strategy cuts pollution and waste from infrastructure and industry, forestry, and agriculture. The policy strategy regulates emissions limits; puts a price on pollution (which along with federal financial support would finance investments); commits to buying the most efficient, least polluting products and services; invests in zero emissions research; and requires infrastructure and land use planning to consider climate change impacts.

The Conservation Council's climate action plan proposal is a contribution to national and provincial processes. The federal Government is negotiating with provinces and territories on their contributions toward commitments we made last December at UN climate negotiations in Paris, France. New Brunswick's Select Committee on Climate Change will engage New Brunswickers in a conversation later this summer about our province's contribution toward regional and national climate change commitments.

The most important thing citizens, business leaders and policy-makers can do right now is to support federal and provincial/territorial governments in bringing greenhouse gas emissions down. We need to work together because we can't solve the climate change problem alone. And together, we can be part of the global energy revolution. The transition to a modern and clean energy system is where the jobs are. Let's make sure that New Brunswick is part of it.