
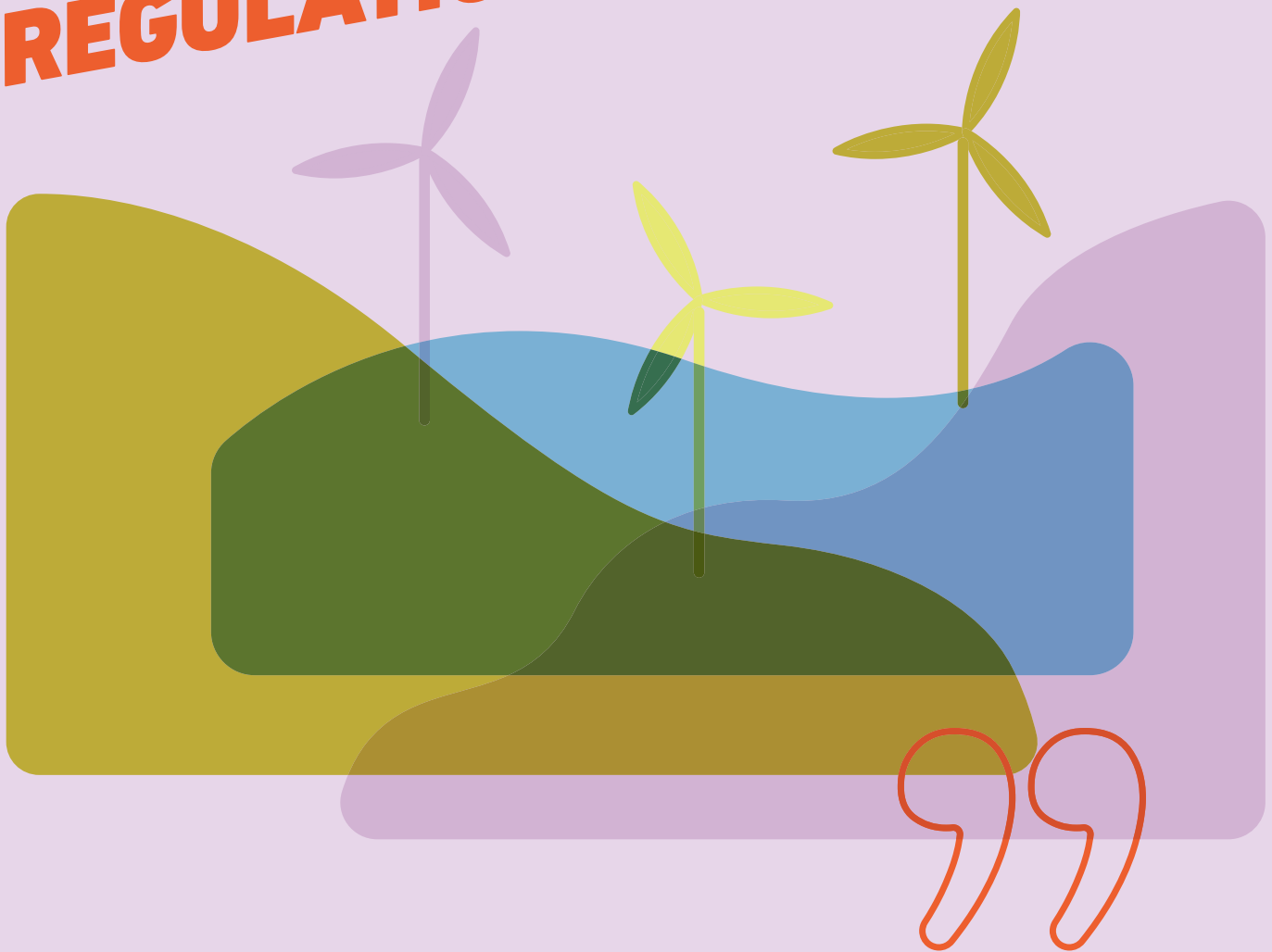


SPRING 2024

**RENEWABLE
POWER
FOR ALL** 

“

VOICES FOR STRONG CLEAN ELECTRICITY REGULATIONS



”



Highlights from over 1,000 letters supporting strong clean electricity regulations

“

‘Clean’ and fossil fuels do not mix. They are contrary, opposing forces.”

“

I and millions of other people in Canada are depending on you to do the right thing and produce a strong regulation to curb rising emissions.”

“

The climate crisis demands that we all work together to ensure a future that allows human life to continue in sustainable form. We need bold federal regulation that will get Canada to 100 per cent clean energy by 2035. Please do not allow new fossil fuels to be added to our electricity mix. Focus instead on developing the new economy and new jobs that a net zero future requires.”

INTRODUCTION

People from all walks of life, including youth, doctors, farmers and retirees, have urged the federal government to listen to people, not polluters, on the path to achieving 100 per cent affordable, reliable, clean electricity in Canada.

Throughout February and March 2024, more than 1,000 people wrote personalized letters to the federal government calling for strong clean electricity regulations. This report contains highlights from those letters. Some quotes have been lightly edited for spelling and clarity.

Some of the letters were written in response to the federal government's announcement that new "flexibilities" in Canada's clean electricity regulations would make room for more fossil fuels on Canada's electricity grid. The letters urge the federal government to support affordable, reliable, renewable electricity, not create more loopholes for fossil fuels.

The letters captured in this report are part of a multi-year effort of people from coast to coast to coast to advocate for ambitious clean electricity regulations. In 2023, the David Suzuki Foundation, along with other allied organizations, mobilized over 40,000 people across Canada to sign petitions calling for strong clean electricity regulations that put us on a path to zero-emissions electricity by 2035. More than 100 people gathered to present those names in a joint petition delivery to federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Steven Guilbeault on June 5, 2023.

Then, during the consultation period on the draft clean electricity regulations, 8,885 people shared their feedback with government on the draft terms, supporting stronger regulations. Of those, 892 added their own feedback in addition to the content provided by policy experts at the Foundation.

Many others in Canada met with their members of Parliament, wrote to their local news outlets, shared content on social media, attended rallies and more — all to encourage the federal government to do everything necessary to achieve 100 per cent clean electricity and usher in the benefits of renewables, despite immense lobbying from the fossil fuel industry.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
DOCTORS AND HEALTH WORKERS	5
FARMERS	7
TEACHERS.....	8
INDIGENOUS VOICES	10
VOICES FROM THE WEST COAST AND THE NORTH	11
VOICES FROM THE PRAIRIES	13
VOICES FROM ONTARIO	15
VOICES FROM QUEBEC	15
VOICES FROM THE EAST COAST	16
INDIVIDUALS LEADING	18
AFFORDABILITY BENEFITS	20
WORKERS AND ECONOMY	21
CLIMATE ANXIETY	23
WHAT INSPIRES HOPE	25
PEOPLE > POLLUTERS	27
WISDOM FROM OUR ELDERS	29
CONCLUSION.....	30





DOCTORS AND HEALTH WORKERS

Among those raising their voices for strong clean electricity policy are doctors and other health care professionals, who see first-hand the human health impacts of climate change and fossil fuel pollution.

“I know what it is like to experience the smoke of last year’s forest fires in eastern Ontario and Quebec. A bad combination of Covid in February and smoke exposure in June contributed to my husband’s demise in early October, and I am now grieving his loss.

“The financial and health costs to individuals, municipalities, provinces and, yes, Canada far [outweigh] the financial benefit of continued use of fossil fuels. It’s important to me that you finalize strong clean electricity regulations ASAP — we can’t afford to wait any longer.”

- KATHLEEN, RETIRED FAMILY PHYSICIAN, MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER IN THE WATERLOO REGION, ONTARIO

“I am very concerned about protecting our climate because of the increasing severity of weather effects and the health risks that occur because of them. Forest fires, especially, have often made spending time outdoors uncomfortable or dangerous, because of the smoke in the Lower Mainland (Metro Vancouver). In the Interior (Kamloops and 100 Mile House areas) last summer, we were unable to breathe outdoor air for more than a few minutes during the forest fires. We were forced to stay indoors and use air purifiers and air conditioning to keep cool and be able to breathe.”

- KIM, RETIRED FAMILY PHYSICIAN IN LANGLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“I am a mother and a clinical child psychologist, and I can say that I am terrified for the future of my child and that of the children I treat. How can we instil hope for the future when we take insufficient action to protect our climate? We are living through the warmest winter I have ever experienced, and wildfire season is becoming longer and longer. We need to take immediate action to protect our planet, stop climate change and build a better world for our children. That future cannot include the use of fossil fuels.”

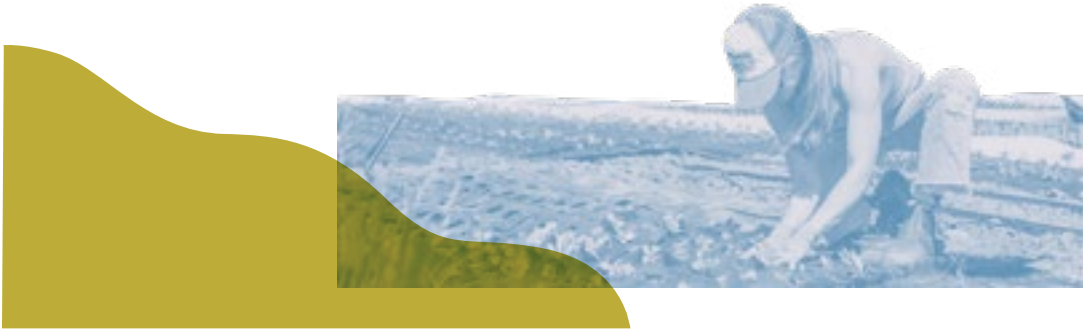
- LEAH IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO

“I am concerned for my patients who struggle with the mental load of this crisis. I am concerned for my patients with chronic lung diseases, like asthma and COPD, who already suffer with the increase in forest fires and poorer air quality. I fear what my children’s future will be. They are so young now, so innocent, they have no idea what might be in store for them. It terrifies me.”

- SHANNON, FAMILY DOCTOR AND A MOTHER OF TWO SMALL TWIN BOYS IN VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“As a psychiatrist, I see first-hand how the climate crisis is disproportionately impacting individuals facing pre-existing structural vulnerabilities. It’s important to me that you finalize strong clean electricity regulations ASAP not only to protect our environment, but to further a just society for all of our community members.”

- SARAH, MOTHER AND PSYCHIATRIST LIVING IN TORONTO, ONTARIO



FARMERS

Working on the land, farmers are on the front lines of the climate crisis, and are some of the strongest voices in favour of a rapid shift from polluting fossil fuels to climate-saving renewable energy.

“Climate change is impacting me today. Increasing temperatures, wildly variable temperatures (heat wave, late frosts) and precipitation (insufficient rainfall during the growing season) are making it increasingly difficult for me to earn a livelihood and feed my community, while increasing the strain on my physical and mental health.”

- KRISTINE, MOTHER AND FARMER IN SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

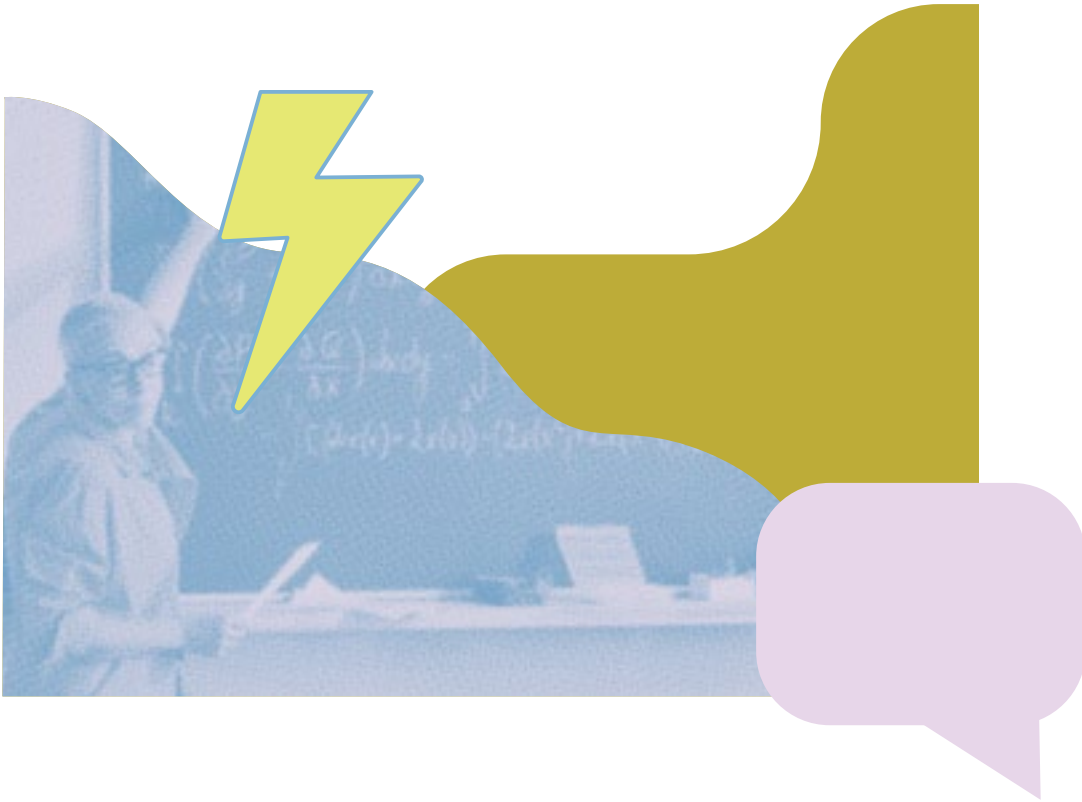
“I farm to produce food and fibre, while also regenerating soils and increasing biodiversity on my farm, so the land I steward is a carbon sink. I’m doing my part to mitigate climate change. As an elected official, you need to do yours.

“The climate needs us to stop fossil fuel use now. And our society can get there as long as we all pull together to support this change, through public and private investment, and public regulation. Our electrical grid needs to be 100 per cent clean, renewable electricity by 2035, with no more gas on the grid.”

- BRENDA, CHINESE-CANADIAN ORGANIC SHEEP FARMER IN GREY COUNTY, ONTARIO

“I am a farmer in Saskatchewan where the introduction of renewables has lagged even though we are a windy and sunny province. To decarbonize my farm I need renewable energy to power my equipment and to produce green nitrogen. The technology to do this exists.”

- CECIL IN ESTERHAZY, SASKATCHEWAN



TEACHERS

Many of those who wrote to decision-makers identified as teachers. You'll see messages from retired teachers throughout this report, and below are some from teachers currently working in the field.

"I am extremely worried about climate change, and very concerned that we aren't moving anywhere near fast enough to prevent it from becoming much worse.

"My province seems to be going in the wrong direction... building highways over important farmland and wetlands, planning to allow gas to be used for electricity and overriding the Ontario Energy Board, to allow Enbridge to change new homes to connect to gas.

"The David Suzuki Foundation produced a study that shows it is possible for us to have affordable zero-emissions electricity across Canada by 2035. Please do everything you can to help fight climate change and preserve our world."

- CAROLYNN, LIFELONG OTTAWA RESIDENT, TEACHER AND MOTHER OF THREE YOUNG ADULTS

“I am deeply concerned about our ability to do anything to avert climate disaster unless we make a serious, meaningful, unequivocal transition to clean electricity as quickly as possible. Continuing to listen to the fossil fuel lobbyists who are dragging their heels (and trying to continue to reap profits while destroying the planet) is a recipe for failure.

“I love the fact that we live in a place with beautiful forests, mountains and relatively clean water but I’m frightened by the increase in the number, length and intensity of our forest fires, the heat domes and other extreme weather like atmospheric rivers, flooding and extreme cold, plus the melting of the arctic ice.

“I think that allowing more gas to be used for electricity is a bad idea because ‘natural gas’ contributes as much (or perhaps more in the short term) to the climate crisis as oil and coal. In order to avert the worst of Climate disasters, (many of which are already happening), we must introduce strong, loop-hole free Clean Electricity legislation by 2035. It’s essential that the clean electricity regulations ensure that no new fossil fuels (including LNG) are added to our electricity mix so that we can reduce emissions, save money and build a reliable grid today and for generations to come.

Please, do what must be done and stop allowing fossil fuel lobbyists to hold up or weaken clean electricity legislation. Enact and enforce a strong, effective Clean Electricity legislation today! Tomorrow is too late!”

- JUDITH, GRANDMOTHER, TEACHER AND MUSICIAN/SONGWRITER FROM BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

INDIGENOUS VOICES



Indigenous Peoples have been on the leading edge of the transition to renewable power throughout Canada and around the world. Here are words of some Indigenous people who wrote to government to support strong action on clean energy.

“I’m from Quebec, but I moved to Ontario last year and it’s almost a totally different climate. I don’t know what to expect this spring let alone the summer weather.

“Last year I experienced the worst forest fire smoke that impacted other parts of our country, and the uncontrolled fires in Quebec were major. I remember colleagues who were unable to go to work, and we could smell the smoke in our offices for a few days. I would wear a mask outside while walking my dog on some days because the air was so thick. I have asthma like so many Canadians. It’s not something that we normally experience. I’ve noticed increased tornado activity last summer, and for at least the past five years.

“We need to look at addressing climate change in the context of increasing targets and more renewable energy. There are windfarms in the eastern part of Quebec where my traditional territories are located. There are many effective ways to achieve those targets. There’s solar energy, and I don’t know why we don’t have more.

“Climate change can be addressed as a matter of safety, housing, emergency management and preparedness. Our world is changing, and it’s changing rapidly. To ensure that the country is prepared, we must all do our part and I would encourage many different ways to do this. We all have different climates and energy infrastructure already in place. But we must also look at the eventual impacts to our food systems, agriculture and food security, especially in a time of greed.

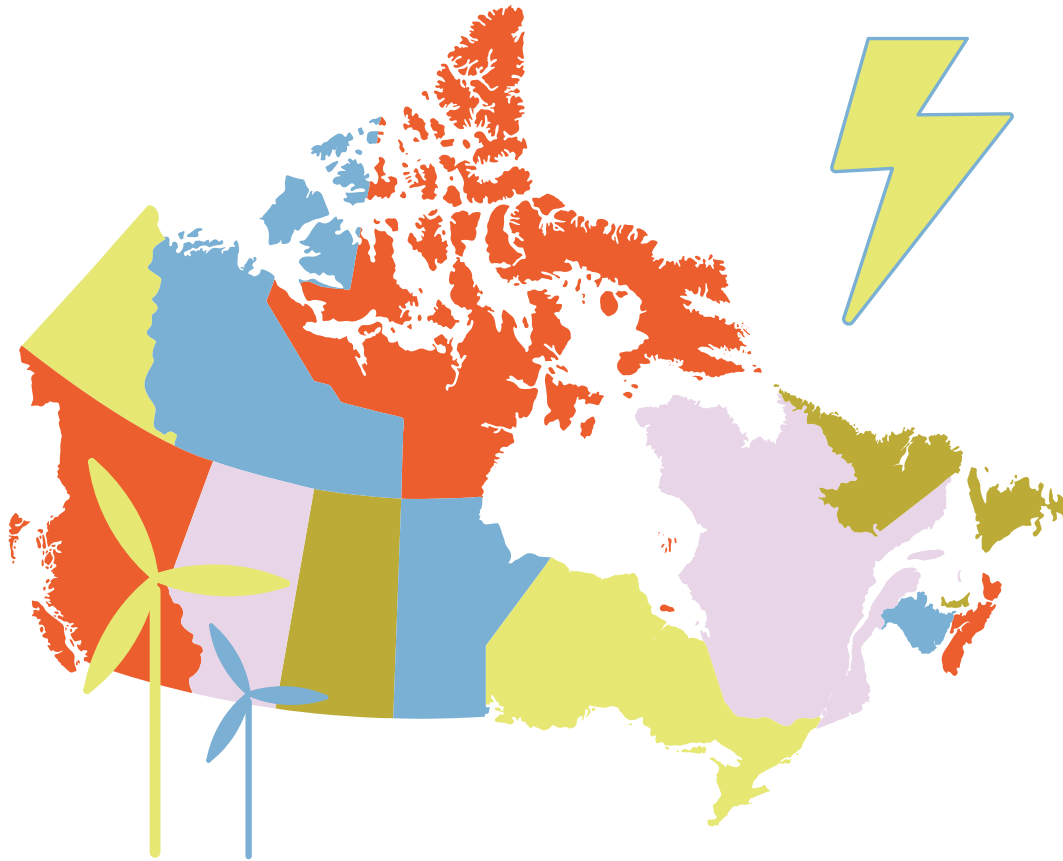
“There’s so many real and tangible ways to collectively in community work with each other. We need more trees planted, more protected coastal and land areas, and First Nations stewardship of the lands needs to be something considered in all of this.

“Our future generations are so important for the Canada that we’re trying to build, engage and grow. We can do the work, but we want our government to be responsible and accountable to build a reliable energy system today. We need to reduce emissions, and clean energy is reliable. We need a system for today’s climate change and get it ready for everyone to come.”

- MARISSA, FIRST NATIONS WOMAN LIVING IN STITTSVILLE, ONTARIO, ON UNCEDED ALGONQUIN TERRITORY

“I’m an Indigenous person from Moose Cree First Nation on (Treaty 9 territory) along the shores of James Bay, formerly known as Rupert’s Land. Our reliance on fossil fuels is not healthy for the planet. I support the climate action strategy of those advocating for better and renewable energy.”

- MICHAEL, MOOSE CREE FIRST NATION ON TREATY 9 TERRITORY



People from every region of the country spoke in favour of strong clean electricity regulations. In the following sections, we have compiled quotes from letters sent by people in these different regions.

VOICES FROM THE WEST COAST AND THE NORTH

“I am very concerned about the future that awaits my own children, my grandchildren and all inhabitants of our planet. I live in beautiful Lions Bay, British Columbia, and have seen the effects of the climate crisis increase year by year. Right now the snow pack above Lions Bay is at an all-time low and we depend on it for our water supply during the increasingly long drought months in the summer. I have also watched large portions of British Columbia burn over the past few summers and I am fearful that my own village could suffer the same fate in the near future if global warming is not halted.”

- VALERIE, RETIRED BIOLOGY TEACHER AND MOTHER OF FIVE IN LIONS BAY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“I am a wildlife photographer from British Columbia. I know firsthand the devastating impact climate change has had on critical habitat for numerous species. In the last two years alone, two of my favourite locations for owls have burnt to a crisp in massive climate-change mediated forest fires. These owls have lost their nest sites just as many people in the surrounding areas have lost their own homes.

“The fear of forest fires prevents me from going to live where I’d really like to, in the B.C. Interior. I know that sooner rather than later, I would be forced to evacuate due to fire or flood and very possibly lose my home too. For the sake of wildlife and people, we need the strongest regulations possible, uninfluenced by the fossil fuel lobby, to transition to a clean energy economy that keeps fossil fuels in the ground. This is entirely possible. We have the technology. I count on your government to have the political will.”

- ROBERTA IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“It’s essential the clean electricity regulations ensure that no new fossil fuels are added to our electricity mix so that we can reduce emissions, save money and build a reliable grid today and for generations to come. We have the technology to increase renewable energy sources exponentially. We need to the political will to make it happen.”

- ELIZABETH, AUTHOR IN POWELL RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“Having a science background and an inquiring mind, I have followed the developments in the renewable energy sector with great interest and have been relieved as the technologies for clean energy have gained efficiency and cost effectiveness. You know that we must reduce and eliminate the burning of fossil fuels to power our energy/transportation needs; that we must stop adding carbon emissions into the atmosphere. All that is lacking is the political will to face the fossil fuel producers and say NO MORE!

“Please stick to your principles and do not allow any new use of fossil fuels to power our electrical grid. Support the development of a clean, renewable energy grid with a plan to eliminate once and for all power produced by burning fossil fuels. I cannot and will not support a government that will not stay strong in the face of the powerful fossil fuel lobbies. We can make this transition, so do it.”

- JULIE, PARENT AND GRANDPARENT FROM MAYNE ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“As a resident of the Northwest Territories who was evacuated last summer due to wildfires, I know the importance of getting greenhouse gases under control. The fossil industry’s desire to continue to make profits at the expense of the world is unconscionable. Don’t listen to them. Set firm rules and tell them to abide by them.”

- BEN IN YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

VOICES FROM THE PRAIRIES

“I am an avid gardener, and I am worried about being able to grow food for my family in 2024. The drought in Western Canada this winter is directly linked to climate change due to fossil fuels. Our family has been doing all that we can to decrease our creation of fossil fuel emissions, and Canada must do the same. Otherwise, our children and grandchildren will be breathing wildfire smoke all their lives. It’s that simple.”

- MARIA IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA

“Every day I am learning more about the climate crisis facing our world and how much the oil and gas industry in Canada, and especially in Alberta, is making matters worse. Your decisions today will determine the health of the planet I will inherit from you.

“We can still make things right but only if those with the power make the right choices now. Please listen to people who are invested in and need a healthy future planet rather than oil and gas executives and fossil fuel lobbyists who seem to just want to make themselves richer regardless of what this will cost future generations.”

- CATRIONA IN CREMONA, ALBERTA

“In the 10 years I’ve been in Edmonton, I’ve seen the worsening impacts of climate change, and I’ve become convinced that the time to act is now. We must transition toward a clean, renewable electricity grid — for the health of our climate, our country and our people. Workers in the fossil fuel industry must be supported in this vital transition.”

- MELISSA, NOVA SCOTIAN LIVING IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA

“Climate change is upon us and we must act promptly and collectively to prevent further climate change that permanently affects our ecosystems, of which we are an integral part. Our children are counting on us.

“The Alberta government does not represent my perspective on oil and gas, climate change and renewables. Alberta can become an ENERGY provider, not a fossil fuel provider, with a transition to renewable energy. If not, we risk being left with stranded fossil fuel assets while the rest of the world moves on.

“Our clean electricity regulations need to be strengthened. We must focus on reducing emissions and building a reliable electrical grid without new fossil fuels added to our electricity mix.

“The status quo is no longer wise for our planet but also no longer wise for our economy.”

- GRACE, GRANDMOTHER, RETIRED TEACHER AND RETIRED FARMER FROM STETTLER, ALBERTA

“I am a grandmother with six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

My concern is that we are not moving fast enough in the transition from fossil fuel emissions to renewable energy for the sake of their health and safety. My nine-year-old and seven-year-old great grandsons have developed asthma which is triggered and intensified by smoke from forest fires. I urge you to listen to physicians that have written about the increase in children’s asthma cases and many other serious health problems in all ages caused by environmental pollution.”

- ELAINE IN REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

“I live and work on the traditional territories of the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Anihsinapek (Saulteaux), Nakoda, Dakota and Lakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis/Michif Nation, in Regina, Saskatchewan. This is a place in which the rich prairie ecosystem remained intact, stewarded by First Nations for thousands of years. However, our arrival as settlers and colonial greed changed all of this. The role of fossil fuels in the destruction of this system is undeniable.

“My son will face the ramifications of climate change and climate chaos in his lifetime, but with a transition to clean energy we can somewhat lessen (not eliminate at this point) those effects. The key to mitigating complete climate chaos is the strengthening of clean electricity regulations... Every minute moving forward is precious at this point, so don’t squander time!”

- TANYA, MOTHER AND SCIENTIST IN REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

VOICES FROM ONTARIO

“I see strong clean electricity regulations as an essential component of a strategy to avoid full climate catastrophe. I vote with this as my primary concern.

“There is no reason for Canada not to move toward clean energy production, when wind and solar are now the most affordable way to produce power. I expect my government to take bold climate action, including legislating for a rapid transition to clean energy. For all our sakes.”

- BILL, PSYCHOLOGIST, BROTHER AND UNCLE IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO

“I am a retired teacher and avid kayaker and hiker. I want to see 100 per cent clean, renewable electricity by 2035. It is important to me that we reduce gas in our electricity grids to keep the air clean and reduce the effects of climate warming.”

- ANNA-MARIE IN MEAFORD, ONTARIO, ON GEORGIAN BAY

“During the Ford government’s tenure I have spent a considerable amount of time writing letters, signing petitions and attending demonstrations/ protests all pertaining to the provincial government’s environmentally destructive policies.

I am now aghast to find that the federal government is, apparently, on the same trajectory. A clean, renewable energy grid by 2035 is possible and, in view of the climate change crisis, necessary. This will not be achieved if the federal government yields to the lobbying of the fossil fuel industry. There should be no watering down of the regulations.”

- ANGELA, RETIRED TEACHER LIVING IN MARKHAM, ONTARIO

VOICES FROM QUEBEC

“I am PhD student, mother and second-generation immigrant. I feel lucky to be able to live in this land and hope that my son’s future will be as joyful as my life has been so far. With the threat of climate catastrophe edging closer and closer, I can’t be sure of that. Just last summer, the wildfire smoke exposed my son’s lungs to dangerous amounts of pollution, that I never knew as a child. I am worried for him and his friends, and for all of us.”

- JULIA IN VERDUN, QUEBEC

“I believe it is our duty to cut back on fossil fuels before it is too late. We need to do everything we can. Our household now uses public transportation 90 per cent of the time and drives electric. But as a single household, we won’t make a big impact. It is the government’s duty to regulate and eventually eliminate fossil fuels in order to protect our planet.”

- DEBBIE IN HUDSON, QUEBEC

“I am a grandmother, gardener and nature lover and I hope my family will have a clean and healthy future. We have the ability to give the next generation hope and prosperity, but we seem to have lost the will. It’s easier to look the other way as Canada burns and suffers. We have already lost so much of our natural resources by the thoughtless and careless actions of the fossil fuel industry. We need strong leadership now to overthrow the lobbyists and give voice to the people.”

- ANNE FROM VALLEYFIELD, QUEBEC

“I’m a structural engineer in Canada and climate change is worrying me to the bones. It’s important to me that you finalize strong clean electricity regulations ASAP because we do not have much time left before all goes to hell (even more than now, that is). I will only vote for a political party that supports a rapid transition to renewable energy, and I hope that this party is yours. Canada will be better off with a clean, renewable electricity grid by 2035. It is always better to be a pioneer than a follower when it comes to making historical decisions and I hope Canada will be a leader that I can be proud of.”

- MYRIAM IN QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC

VOICES FROM THE EAST COAST

“I am terrified of how climate change is already impacting the life of my son and my students. Here in the Maritimes, wildfires, floods and Fiona have given us a glimpse of what the future of our children will look like unless we strengthen our clean electricity regulations now.”

- ANNA, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND MOTHER OF A TODDLER, IN HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

“I have two children and four grandchildren. I am very concerned about the future for my family as they will experience the effects of climate change. I urge you therefore to resist the pressure and lobby effect of the fossil fuel industry which would advocate for the status quo. We are in an emergency! We can and must move to clean renewable electricity. You are in a position to make this happen. Please support clean electricity in Canada by 2035.”

- HAROLD, RETIRED FAMILY DOCTOR IN NEW BRUNSWICK

“Our daughter is a scientist and doctoral student studying climate change and the shifts we must make, now. We are all critically aware of the impacts of climate change, the disastrous effects on our living environments.

“I, and my family, have decided that the number one political issue is climate change and will only be listening to/voting for a party with a platform addressing rapid transition to renewable energy.”

- MICHELLE, MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

“Do not pass any regulations that allow for any greater use of fossil fuels for the grid. We must dramatically reduce our use of fossil fuels and increase the use of renewable energy sources. I think the future lies in solar energy which should be a primary focus. This will give us the real benefits of affordable, reliable, zero-emissions electricity. Do everything in your power to reduce our use of expensive fossil fuels that pollute our planet and line the pockets of billionaires”

- JUDITH, GRANDMOTHER IN NOVA SCOTIA



INDIVIDUALS LEADING

Many who wrote in are already taking action at individual and community levels to build the solutions we need. They want the government to step up too.

“I am deeply troubled by the slow progress on climate action from the federal government. We are facing a multi-year drought and low snowpack in the West, after one of the smokiest summers on record.

“Our family has invested \$15,000 on a heat pump this year, \$10,000 on solar panels. We are prioritizing our savings to do our part for climate change. It doesn't feel that my elected officials are prioritizing climate action given the urgency.

“We must have 100 per cent renewable energy on the grid. We must phase out fossil fuels.”

- JULIENNE, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY IN CALGARY, ALBERTA

“I really want my country to move to a clean electricity grid ... I recently installed a heat pump to reduce my fossil fuel use. If my electricity comes from a gas-fired plant this will have been in vain!”

- CAROLYNN, MOTHER OF THREE IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO

“This year we installed an electric heat pump in our home as a small contribution to addressing a greater problem. I want it to be powered by clean electricity.”

- ROBERT IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

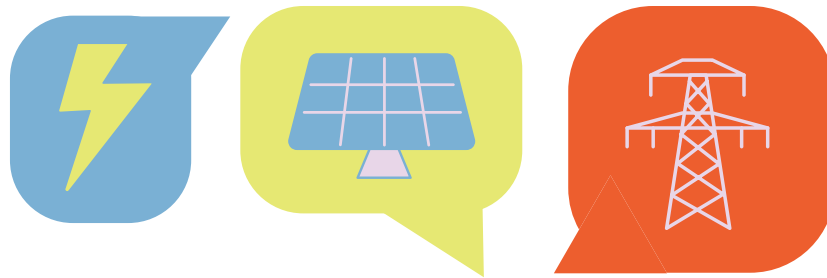
“My two young adult children inspire me to protect our planet from climate change. We drive an electric car and use a heat pump to heat/ cool our home. We are making an effort to curb our own emissions, and I would like to see the government investing in 100 per cent clean, renewable electricity by 2035.”

- AUDREY IN WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

“I do my best to conserve electricity. I keep my heat at 16 C at night and don't turn it up until after I do Zumba from 9 to 10 a.m. I turn off lights that aren't needed. I hang up most of my laundry other than sheets and towels. I only run my dishwasher when it's full. I use my toaster oven or microwave instead of my stove oven. I use my double blinds (mesh and accordion) to keep the cold out in winter. I turn off the hot water when shampooing or soaping up to conserve hot water.

“We need to ALL work harder to move away from fossil fuels if there is any chance of saving our planet and preventing it from becoming unable to support life as we know it. I urge you to stop being swayed by the powerful oil and gas lobbyists and do what's RIGHT for humanity!”

- GAIL IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA



AFFORDABILITY BENEFITS

Those who are able to make their homes climate-friendly have been able to experience the immense affordability benefits of energy efficiency and clean energy. This shouldn't be a luxury for a few, but rather something our government ensures all people can have.

"I am very concerned about climate change. As an individual, I have been doing my part to reduce my carbon footprint. Without a clean electricity grid, all the money I have invested in decarbonizing my lifestyle will be less effective and more costly. I am urging you to take the lead toward building clean, renewable electricity by 2035."

- JANET, GRANDMOTHER IN ORILLIA, ONTARIO

"When we first moved here we only had oil for heating our home. Electricity was used for lighting and heating in a connected bachelor flat. We had the opportunity to switch the heating for the main house to electricity this year and stop using petrol. And even after the changeover, we are saving on heating costs and supporting a cleaner environment thanks to Hydro Quebec. I feel it is important that all Canadians benefit from a clean renewable electricity grid in the near future."

- SUZANNE, SENIOR CITIZEN LIVING IN MONT TREMBLANT, QUEBEC

"We have installed 34 solar panels on our roof over the last five years and in 2019, bought our first EV. BC Hydro acts as our battery for storage of energy that we create in the sunnier months ... and we find that we now pay \$6.50 per month for the energy needed to power our car and our house — probably just enough to pay the accountant who sends out the bills."

- CAROL AND DAVID IN SOOKE, BRITISH COLUMBIA



WORKERS AND ECONOMY

The transition to clean energy has immense employment and economic benefits, something well documented in research by the David Suzuki Foundation and our allies and highlighted by these action-takers.

“It is vitally important that Canada shift ASAP to electrical power supply for all energy needs: heating and cooling of buildings, transportation and for industrial uses. I say this as a retired energy consultant, business owner, builder and manufacturer — someone who spent over 45 years working in these fields.

“Technically feasible and economically sound solutions abound, and they do not include the large-scale combustion of carbon-based fuels. A deadline of 2035 for the removal of all gas-fired equipment from existing buildings is reasonable, with incentives for quicker action.”

- ELIZABETH FROM SALT SPRING ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“One hundred per cent zero-emissions electricity by 2035 is not only possible but also RELIABLE AND AFFORDABLE. Tomorrow’s grid can be reliably powered by large amounts of solar and wind supported by existing hydroelectric reservoirs, interregional transmission, energy efficiency, electrification and energy storage. The transition to clean electricity comes with new jobs in the renewables sector.

“We spend \$7 trillion every year subsidizing fossil fuel industries that harm the planet. Last year fossil fuel corporations made \$38 billion in profits. This money must be put towards wind and solar energy.”

- MARGO FROM SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

“I have worked in the field of natural resources and emergency preparedness in Ontario for several decades. I have been on the volunteer climate action advisory committee for the City of Pembroke, Ontario, for over three years now.

“During the time that I have been on that advisory committee, I have looked at a seemingly enormous amount of scientific material. The evidence is clear; we need to drastically and immediately reduce our consumption of fossil fuels. We need strong leadership at all levels of government. I am doing my bit through working at the municipal level. My grandchildren will know that I tried.

“Building gas-burning electricity generating plants is ridiculous. We have the technology to build a strong renewable energy sector in Canada. There are enough studies to prove this. Renewable energy can be brought onto the grid faster than fossil fuel or nuclear power plants and is so much cleaner and cheaper.

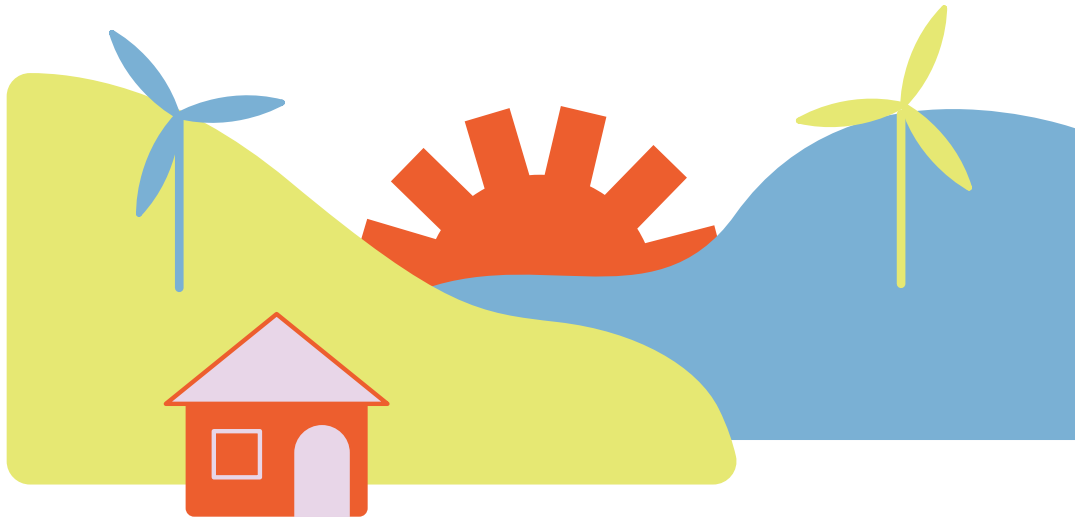
“This is the most pressing issue of our time. We must move away from burning fossil fuels now and we need government help to make it happen.”

- ANN, MOTHER OF TWO IN PEMBROKE, ONTARIO

“I am concerned about the environment and climate change for future generations. We can already see the effect of climate change and severe weather, not only in Canada but across the globe.

“I think that allowing more gas to be used for electricity is a bad idea because there are much cleaner technologies to take advantage of that guarantee future electricity needs. It’s important to me that you finalize a strong clean electricity regulations ASAP because this keeps dragging on and the sooner we do this, the sooner we can get to our climate targets and promises.”

- AMAL, ENGINEER BASED IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO



CLIMATE ANXIETY

Many people who sent in messages expressed climate anxiety as they witness worsening impacts of climate change while our governments fail to meet the crisis with the ambition necessary to avoid making the crisis worse.

“I am heartbroken by and terrified of the reality of climate change. I have watched the world change completely in my lifetime, and I have watched politicians and the oil companies provide excuse after excuse as to why that cannot be helped. It can be, as proven by decades of scientific research; climate change to the extent that we’re experiencing it was completely avoidable if action was taken in the 60s and 70s.”

- ELI, YOUNG PERSON FROM VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“I have been concerned about the environment since I became aware of related issues during my early adulthood. My own grown children are all in healthy, long-term relationships, but are hesitant to have their own children as they are unsure of what the future holds regarding the liveable state of our planet. I can’t say I blame them, and I leave that heavy decision for them to make.”

- GINETTE, MOTHER OF THREE AND RETIRED RESOURCE TEACHER IN WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

“We had our first granddaughter in October and her future is frightening when it comes to climate uncertainty and with it the political and economic consequences for the planet. Allowing more gas to be introduced into our grid is one compromise too many.”

- SHAWN, RETIRED FINANCIAL PLANNING SPECIALIST WITH A MASTER'S IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, LIVING IN TORONTO, ONTARIO

“I’m petrified for the next generations as I see very little progress being made to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. The solutions for Canada are there for all to see — clean electricity.”

- CLAUDETTE, GRANDMOTHER IN COURTENAY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“I’m constantly worrying about what my future is going to look like in the face of climate change. This winter, with barely any snow, and seemingly more days above zero than below, and topping heat records was a stark reminder of that. Last summer with it’s blazing wildfires gives me worry over what this summer will look like.

“We have the technology and the means in place to reduce energy emissions. Show Canadians that you care about younger generations’ futures more than profit and short-lived luxury. You stepped up and took radical action when it was your generation at risk with covid; give younger generations the same courtesy now that it is us facing the larger consequences.”

- MICHELLE, MASTERS STUDENT IN BIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA, ONTARIO



WHAT INSPIRES HOPE

While the climate crisis threat is pressing, many expressed how the possibility and promise of the renewable energy revolution gives them hope for the future.

“I live in Alberta which has been in an ongoing drought. This is in part because my provincial and federal government have been supporting the burning of fossil fuels at the cost of our earth, climate and food production.

“To face the climate crisis we need creative, forward-looking ideas. We need to stop burning fossil fuels and the best place to start is with power generation. There are already alternatives like solar and wind that are low-cost, environmentally and financially. It is the role of the federal government to take action. You shouldn’t wait for provincial governments and oil companies. I’d love to see a public high-speed train between Calgary and Edmonton running on wind and solar energy. This reduces CO2 emissions, reduces car and air travel and benefits commuters.”

- FINLEY, 14-YEAR-OLD IN CALGARY, ALBERTA

“Having a clean electricity grid by 2035 is vital for our climate. It is essential that the clean electricity regulations ensure that no new fossil fuels are added to the electricity mix. Not only does this ensure emissions are reduced, but it saves money and will be reliable for our future generations. Zero emissions electricity is possible, and will benefit communities across Canada, creating jobs and improving air quality.”

- SHANNON, FAMILY DOCTOR IN SAANICH, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“Climate change is very concerning to me after witnessing the growing impacts to B.C. and Canada, so the transition to clean energy gives me a lot of hope.”

- ELIZABETH IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“I am a young adult looking ahead to the future prosperity and resiliency of our beautiful nation. I live in the rapidly advancing community of St. Thomas whose role in the electric vehicle economy is rapidly making it the centre of Ontario.

“Climate change is the biggest threat to the health and stability of our communities, both global and local. For this reason, prioritizing solutions that build a clean, green economy and existence must be top priority. A viable plan excludes new fossil fuel inputs. Modelling shows that reliable and affordable zero-emissions electricity is possible across Canada. Implemented thoughtfully, this transition can create jobs and improve the quality of communities across Canada.”

- KATARINA IN ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO

“Studies show that reliable, affordable, zero-emissions electricity is possible across Canada by 2035. (Just today I read news about a new solar panel that looks like a sheet of glass, making it possible for skyscrapers to become energy-generating centres!) The possibilities are out there and they offer a climate solution that will benefit communities large and small, create much needed clean jobs and improve our air quality and climate impacts.”

- CAROLYN, RETIRED EDITOR IN SOOKE, BRITISH COLUMBIA



PEOPLE > POLLUTERS

Again and again, people wrote about the need for government officials to prioritize the interests of people and communities over the interests of Big Oil.

“I am a retired physician, mother and grandmother who believes in the science of climate change and am doing everything possible, as an individual, to minimize my carbon footprint, largely for the benefit of future generations. I have no patience for the oil and gas lobby and the fact that the government looks positioned to detour from its commitment to regulations that would get Canada to 100 per cent clean, reliable, affordable electricity by 2035 by forbidding the addition of more fossil fuels. What’s the point of citizens incurring the costs of air sealing their homes and switching to heat pumps and EVs, if the electricity consumed by these technologies comes, in part, from added fossil fuels?”

- JANE IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO

“My fear about climate change is what kind of Canada my family will be left with. The Alberta government doesn’t represent my perspective on oil and gas, climate change and renewables. Canada needs clean, renewable electricity, not more fossil fuels! Please do not give in to their pushing back to protect their profits.”

- DONNA, MOTHER OF THREE AND A GRANDMOTHER OF FOUR LIVING IN THE RIDING OF CALGARY-SKYVIEW, ALBERTA

“I was raised to respect nature and always leave things as you found them; never leave a mess for someone else to clean up. It grieves me to witness what the fossil fuel industry has done to our planet and societies.

“I believe leaders should be promoting a new way of being on our home planet by shrugging what ‘industry’ tries to convince us is the best way forward. We must focus on reducing our fossil fuel consumption, while ensuring, by way of regulations, that opportunities exist to enhance the electricity grid in a clean way.”

- TRUDI, GRANDMOTHER BORN AND RAISED IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA

“I’m angry with repeated concessions made by governments to the biggest cause of the climate emergency we are now in: the fossil fuel industry. There is nothing ‘natural’ about fossil gas for heating and production of electricity. It needs to be phased out through strong, clean electricity regulations. No more loopholes!”

- MURRAY, SENIOR CITIZEN AND CLIMATE ACTIVIST IN CAMPBELL RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA



WISDOM FROM OUR ELDERS

While people from all ages and cultural backgrounds are speaking up, we have seen an overwhelming number of elders taking consistent action for climate justice. The letters below are from some of these elders, urging decision-makers to deliver on the promise of 100 per cent renewable power across Canada by 2035 and the immense benefits that will come with it.

“The whole point of clean energy regulations is to move away from fossil fuels, not let the camel’s nose back into the tent. I am 73 and have been waiting most of my life for renewables to be the main source of energy in Canada and the world. Don’t wimp out now.”

- TERRY IN CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“My father said to me many years ago, ‘I am leaving you a better world than the one in which I grew up in during the Depression.’ I cannot say that to my children. I cannot lie to them. I can only do what I can as one person to try and build a better world.

“It is time to decide to protect our grandchildren with tough climate policies. It is time to stop investing in the past for the profit of the few and embrace a transition to a new energy future. The fatal blow to our economy will not come from dealing with the climate challenge but from pandering to those whose destructive economy is dying.”

- TOM, ON NOVA SCOTIA'S SOUTH SHORE

“The only way forward is with a clean, renewable electricity grid by 2035.

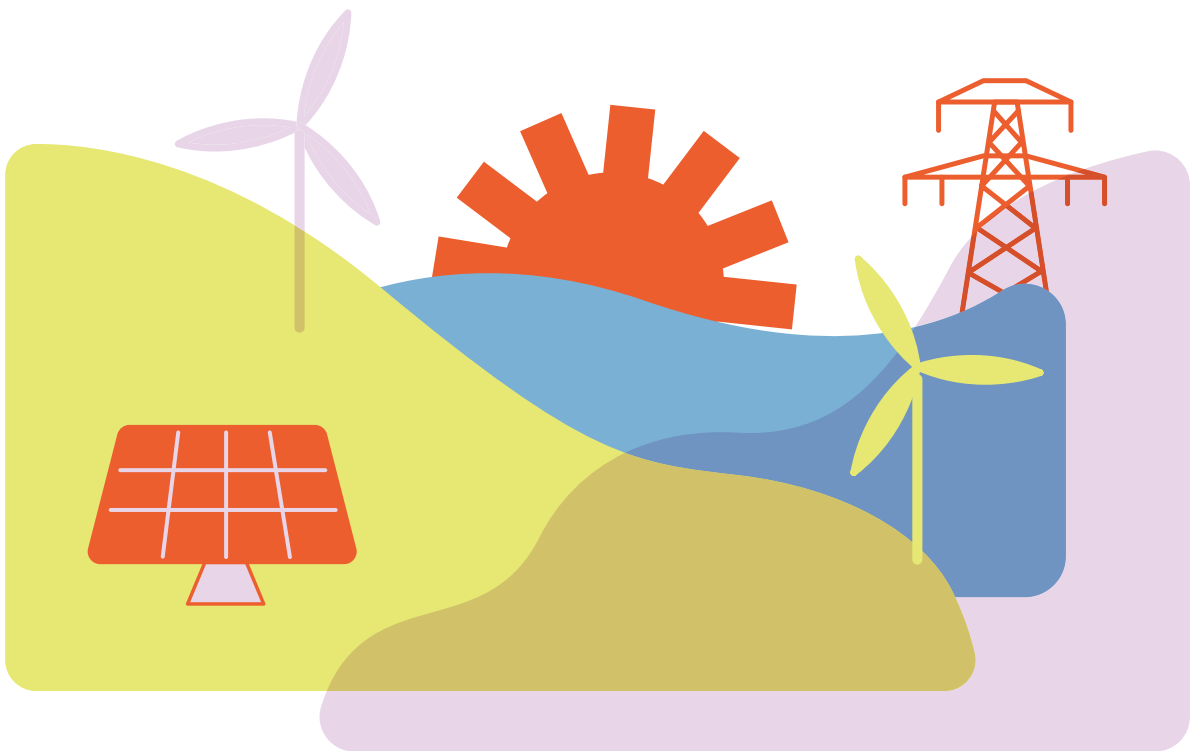
We were able to come together and put politics aside to tackle covid-19, we can do so for climate change — this should not be a political issue and politicians have to stop being afraid to take quick action for fear of losing votes. Leaders must lead — now more than ever.”

- SARAH MOTHER OF THREE CHILDREN AND A CERTIFIED FOREST AND NATURE SCHOOL PRACTITIONER IN THE YORK REGION, ONTARIO

“I want to see a world where all of us can thrive and be healthy in the future.

Wouldn't it be a remarkable legacy of the current government to set in place legislation to make this happen within the next decade? All in my family are cheering you on and hoping that you can make it possible for us. Let Canada be a leader in climate action. Let's show the rest of the world we care and we are going to take the necessary steps to save this beautiful planet of ours.”

- LAURIE, RETIRED COMPUTER ENGINEER, MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER IN DUNROBIN, ONTARIO



CONCLUSION

Hundreds more powerful and compelling voices spoke up for strong clean electricity regulations. Unfortunately, we couldn't reflect them all in this report. Collectively, these letters lay out a clear direction for our government: implement regulations that decarbonize Canada's electricity grid and put it on a path to 100 per cent renewable power for all.

Please note: some quotes have been edited for spelling and grammar and abridged for clarity.

This report was compiled and written by Katie Perfitt, Clean Electricity Campaigner at the David Suzuki Foundation.