

# Government of Alberta News Release

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**For Immediate release:**  
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## **Alberta releases strategy for action on climate change**

*Edmonton...* Scientific research and development, action by industry and government to reduce emissions, and the establishment of a private-public sector partnership to engage Albertans in discussion and action on climate change are among the key elements of the Alberta government's strategy for action, released today by Guy Boutilier, chair of the Cabinet Committee on climate change. Premier Ralph Klein established the cabinet committee in February 1998 to develop the Alberta government's position in the wake of the Kyoto conference.

"Our committee consulted with municipal leaders, academics, industry and environmental stakeholders in developing this strategy," said Boutilier (MLA - Fort McMurray). "Cabinet has accepted our committee's recommendations and these will now form the basis of our official government position on climate change. Energy Minister Steve West and Environmental Protection Minister Ty Lund will be taking this position forward at the joint ministers meeting on climate change in Halifax October 19-20."

The members of the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change are: Guy Boutilier (chair), Energy Minister Steve West, Environmental Protection Minister Ty Lund, Justice Minister Jon Havelock, Intergovernmental Affairs Minister David Hancock, and Science and Research Minister Lorne Taylor.

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**Attachments:** Alberta's Strategy for Action on climate change; Alberta government position statement on climate change.

### **For more information:**

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### **Alberta's Strategy for Action on Climate Change - Preliminary Report**

Earlier this year Premier Ralph Klein established the cabinet committee on climate change to consult with stakeholders and get back to Cabinet with a recommendation on the government's position in the wake of the Kyoto conference. The committee consulted with municipal leaders, academics, environmentalists, and industry. The committee also consulted with the Alberta Economic Development Authority (AEDA) which, in turn, consulted with its stakeholders. Following is the committee's preliminary report on the guidelines for a made-in-Alberta response to the global issue of climate change and a draft statement outlining Alberta's position on climate change.

### **Risk**

The committee agrees with the assessment that the risk of greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change warrants **precautionary measures** - which would mean incurring prudent costs to achieve best efforts in reducing the growth in emissions.

### **Principles**

In light of the above risk assessment, the committee recommends that the Alberta government strategy incorporate the following principles:

1. The Prime Minister should be held to his commitment to Premiers to ensure equitable treatment

across Canada, without placing undue burden on Canadians in a particular province or region. No inter-regional or cross-sectoral wealth transfers should result. We should continue to ask the federal government to research the impact on Alberta of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to the levels cited in the Kyoto Accord.

2. Alberta should renew its commitment to best efforts in reducing emissions.
3. We must include energy consumers in our strategy because energy consumption is responsible for a large percentage of increases in emissions.
4. The long-term solution will be based on innovation and technology.
5. Competitiveness of all sectors and the economy as a whole must be maintained or enhanced.
6. Responses must be cost-effective and justifiable in the context of Alberta's and Canada's competitive position.
7. Excessive penalties on existing business and personal investments must be avoided by giving adequate lead-time and gradual implementation.

## **Recommendations**

The committee believes the government should form a partnership with Albertans to establish a policy and take actions to improve energy productivity.

Alberta's response to the climate change challenge should be based on the province's needs and circumstances in the national and global context, and should maintain its commitment to People, Prosperity and Preservation. Alberta should continue to be a world leader in promoting the wise use of energy resources (the **Environmental Energy Advantage**).

The Alberta government should announce a multi-pronged action plan to promote the Environmental Energy Advantage. A process to engage Albertans should follow.

## **Alberta's Action Plan**

The committee recommends that the Alberta government promote and develop the Environmental Energy Advantage with a commitment to support the following elements:

- **Scientific and technological research:** In conjunction with industry and universities, research ways to improve energy use in areas such as residential and commercial buildings, transportation, agricultural and industrial processes, biotechnology, engineering, and environmental sciences. Consolidate Alberta government research and development efforts.
- **Business and individual action to improve energy productivity:** Encourage individual Albertans and industries to adopt energy efficient practices through measures such as Destination Conservation's School Energy Upgrade Program, joint research and development ventures, standards, emissions trading and technology transfers.
- **Government action to improve energy productivity:** Improve the energy efficiency of Alberta government operations through energy audits of government buildings, appliances and vehicles and energy productivity targets for departments.
- **Economic analysis:** Analyze and participate in research examining issues such as multi-sectoral economic impacts and initiatives underway in other countries.
- **Communications plan:** Work with the private sector to develop a major national and international communications plan to promote the Environmental Energy Advantage, emphasizing best practices to improve energy productivity.
- **Climate Change Central:** Establish a government/private sector partnership to engage Albertans in public discussion and education re: climate change and energy efficiency.

## **STATEMENT OF ALBERTA'S POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Alberta's record**

Albertans want and enjoy clean air and water. Alberta prides itself in these areas, leading the country in our actions to protect the environment, from the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act ... to the Clean Air Strategy ... to the Voluntary Challenges Registry Program.

When it comes to greenhouse gas emissions, Alberta has always believed in the cautionary principle of taking prudent actions to minimize our impact on the environment. Alberta has always believed in doing our best to reduce greenhouse gases. That's why we are leading all other Canadian provinces in our efforts to reduce emissions. Alberta was ahead of the game when it signed on to the Voluntary Challenges Registry Program. Our government is well ahead of its own 14 per cent emission reduction target, making us the best government in the country, and the third best organization overall in terms of reducing emissions. We have already reduced emissions by 10 per cent.

### **A fair solution for Albertans**

We have heard talk about the national strategy for climate change. Let's not forget that Alberta players - Alberta's industry and environmental leaders - are key players in the national effort. Albertans have always been first to the plate when it comes to important national issues like this. And Alberta has been participating fully in the federal government tables on climate change.

Albertans and Alberta industry are committed to a solution - one that considers all provinces, all countries, all sectors as part of the solution. We must continue to hold the Prime Minister to his word when he told Premiers last year that there would be an equitable approach to a Canada-wide solution, one that does not place an unfair burden on one province or area.

The provinces and the people who live in the provinces play a key role in implementing greenhouse gas reduction strategies. Provinces need a role in developing an equitable and fair solution. A poorly designed solution could result in profound and unwarranted economic impacts on Canadians.

### **Alberta's Strategy**

Alberta is committed to a long-term solution. We are committed to supporting technology and innovation in this province. We are committed to studying greenhouse gas emissions.

We are committed to helping businesses, individuals and governments take action to reduce emissions. We are committed to sustainable development. We are committed to educating the public.

Over the months to come, we will determine what resources are needed and how we can contribute to the Environmental Energy Advantage in this province. We want to continue to develop this strategy the way we always have - with our partners in Alberta.

We want to continue to be leaders and forge new ground in this area. By being on the leading edge, we can play a role in helping other provinces and other countries utilize the new technologies. We know there are many areas of the world which still use outdated technology. Although Alberta produces energy to meet world demand, we do not consume as much as many other jurisdictions. There may also be a role for Alberta to play in promoting better consumption practices around the world.

It's not a matter of a quick fix ... or an arbitrary target level. It's a matter of changing the way we view the environment in our homes and in our workplaces. Sustainable development is not simply a program but a way of life.

Alberta is not going to wait for action on the federal front. We are acting now.

We realize that global climate change is a real and serious issue - we are committed to cooperative action. We are committed to finding a solution. And over the coming months our government will be building partnerships. We will engage Albertans in promoting and developing best practices as well as educating the public and industry

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