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September 14, 2015

An Open Letter to:

Stephen Harper, Leader, Conservative Party of Canada

Thomas Mulcair, Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada

Justin Trudeau, Leader, Liberal Party of Canada

Gilles Duceppe, Leader, Bloc Quebecois

Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada

From Pope Francis to President Obama, from Naomi Klein to Preston Manning, there is an emerging consensus that climate change is the most pressing environmental issue of our age. In British Columbia, climate change has already triggered destruction of vast tracts of forest, historic droughts, catastrophic storms, devastation of fisheries, agricultural failures and unprecedented wildfires. In the rest of Canada, a similar story is unfolding.

Today, Sierra Club BC released a report, written by University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre, that details how British Columbia's Environmental Assessment (EA) process is failing to consider climate change. *Blind Spot: The Failure to Consider Climate Change in British Columbia's Environmental Assessments* recommends a coherent set of urgently-needed policy changes to ensure proposed projects are assessed on the basis of a scientifically valid climate test.

Currently, among other flaws, British Columbia's EAs ignore the effects of extracting fossil fuels such as tar sands oil or natural gas (upstream impacts), as well as the emissions resulting from burning these fuels outside of B.C. (downstream impacts).

To ensure climate is considered and to assist British Columbia in meeting its greenhouse gas emission targets, the report recommends policy changes that follow the lead of other jurisdictions, such as Washington State, Australia and the European Union. These include automatic triggers, consideration of upstream and downstream impacts, and withholding approval for projects that would breach legislated emissions reduction targets.

Both the flaws and solutions are relevant to federal EAs as well. As you know, current EAs such as the review of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline and tankers proposal specifically exclude any consideration of climate change.



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Sierra Club BC urges all federal parties to adopt the principles and approaches recommended in this report in their platforms, and commit to reforming the federal environmental assessment process to include full consideration of climate impacts. Further, Sierra Club BC calls on each party to commit to putting proposed pipelines and other projects to a robust climate test, should its elected members be successful in forming the next government of Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Bob Peart".

Bob Peart

Executive Director

Sierra Club BC