

EMBARGOED until May 9, 2018

CEOs of Canada's 12 largest environmental groups grade the federal government on progress toward environmental commitments

OTTAWA – A report released today by the leaders of Canada's top environmental organizations reviews the progress of the federal government in meeting its platform and mandate commitments on environmental issues across the country.

The Report, *The Clock is Ticking*, assesses on-the-ground accomplishments against commitments on seven key issue areas, including climate change, biodiversity and habitat conservation, environmental assessments, water, Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) reform, charitable regulatory frameworks, and participation by civil society in public policy.

The report notes good progress on a few issues, namely financial investments in climate and conservation, reform of the Fisheries Act, renewed leadership and funding for terrestrial protection, support for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, meeting the 2017 marine protection target, and for suspending the politically-motivated audits on charities.

While the groups applaud the positive progress, they note the following gaps:

- Canada's Paris Agreement targets for carbon emission reductions are quickly becoming out of reach and Canada is unlikely to meet its already insufficiently ambitious climate targets largely due to lack of regulation of oil and gas emissions;
- Species at risk are not being protected, especially umbrella species like the Woodland Caribou and the Orca;
- The environmental/impact assessment legislation needs further work; and that
- The legal reform for charities is stalled.

The report comes just weeks after federal Environment Commissioner and auditors general in nine provinces released an audit stating, "most governments in Canada were not on track to meet their commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and were not ready for the impacts of a changing climate."¹

Also this month, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services released a report concluding that the world is facing unprecedented biodiversity loss requiring immediate action: "The best available evidence, gathered by the world's leading experts, points us now to a single conclusion: we must act to halt and reverse the unsustainable use of nature — or risk not only the future we want, but even the lives we currently lead."²

The coalition looks forward to continuing its work with the federal government on improving the environmental conditions in the country, with the aim of meeting Canada's international commitments, and strategically investing tax dollars in climate and conservation projects.

¹ http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_otp_201803_e_42883.html#hd2c Accessed April 17, 2018

² <https://www.ipbes.net/news/media-release-biodiversity-nature%E2%80%99s-contributions-continue-%C2%A0dangerous-decline-scientists-warn> Accessed April 17, 2018

ADDENDUM TO REPORT

Since the publication of this report, there has been significant progress on the park management file. On Monday, May 7, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change released [her response to the round table on Parks Canada](#), reaffirming Ecological Integrity as the primary priority over visitor use.

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[Read the Report](#)

Signatories: *équiterre, ecojustice, Pembina Institute, Greenpeace, CPAWS, David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Club of Canada Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, West Coast Environmental Law, Environmental Defence, Nature Canada, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada*

Quotes & Media Contacts

Tim Gray, Executive Director, Environmental Defence:

"The environmental challenges facing Canada require urgency and ambition. The federal government has made a great start in several areas, notably climate change, land and marine conservation, and park management. However, there we still need them live up to the leadership promised when they were elected. In particular, the fact that progress to protect charities from political harassment has stalled, is troubling."

Media inquiries: Barbara Hayes, Environmental Defence, 613-255-5724, bhayes@environmentaldefence.ca

Megan Leslie, president and CEO of World Wildlife Fund Canada:

"This report card shows the federal government is doing the work, but the results often don't make the grade, especially on species recovery and habitat protection. We're hopeful the funding allocation and work plans for the \$1.3 billion committed to these issues in the 2018 budget will achieve better outcomes."

Media inquiries: Philippe Devos, WWF-Canada, 416-453-0092

Éric Hébert-Daly, National Executive Director, CPAWS:

"Thanks to a historic investment in conservation in the last federal budget, there's a lot that can be done in the coming year. This will make reaching our international conservation commitment of 17% of land and fresh water a real possibility. We look forward to working with the federal government on making this a reality."

Media inquiries: Karen Turner, CPAWS, 613-569-7226, ext 232, media@cpaws.org

Steve Cornish, CEO, David Suzuki Foundation:

“The federal government has made important headway on some key environmental issues, from a historic \$1.3 billion in Budget 2018 for the protection and restoration of nature to the recent unveiling of the world’s first comprehensive federal methane regulations,” said David Suzuki Foundation CEO Steve Cornish. “With that said, if we’re serious about environmental protection and meeting our Paris climate commitments, then government needs to shift into high gear on converting promise into meaningful progress on the ground.”

Media inquiries: Brendan Glauser, David Suzuki Foundation, bGlauser@davidsuzuki.org

Jessica Clogg, Executive Director & Senior Counsel, West Coast Environmental Law Association:

“While the proposed *Impact Assessment Act* includes some promising elements, it leaves too much leeway for the government to approve projects based on politics rather than evidence. A next-generation assessment law must ensure that projects cannot be approved without meeting legal ‘bottom-lines’ like consistency with Canada’s climate commitments and upholding Indigenous rights.”

Media inquiries: Jessica Clogg, 778-327-8964