



November 25, 2022

Hon. Dominic Leblanc, Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Hon. Chrystia Freeland
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers Leblanc, Wilkinson, Freeland:

Transformation of Canada's electricity system is a Canadian success story we need to build on to reach a zero-emitting grid by 2035. Electrifying our economy, as you well know, is one of the most exciting opportunities Canada has to reach its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by 2030. Electrifying our economy is also one of our greatest challenges given the complexity, pace and jurisdictional dimensions of electrification.

If we are to build on past successes we need, therefore, to take a systems approach in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector. Unfortunately, at the moment federal and provincial discussions on options to decarbonize the grid remain disaggregated and disjointed. Negotiations on the Atlantic Loop are a case in point.

Atlantic Loop negotiations and public discourse are focused on the build out of transmission interconnects to create a loop for Atlantic electricity trade. Unfortunately, the focus on transmission alone suggests an outcome where trade is to the benefit of two provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, rather than for all Atlantic provinces and Quebec. We gain little, if Nova Scotia and New Brunswick transfer wealth to other regions, rather than all provinces engaging in electricity trade to the benefit of all. Critically, in a recent survey conducted for the Conservation Council of New Brunswick by Abacus Research, Canadians prefer in-province and renewable electricity supply option over imports from outside their respective provinces (see Appendix). Canadians want in-province renewables first, with electricity trade a benefit for all, not out-of-province imports to the benefit of a few.

Discussions of the Atlantic Loop also must be squarely positioned as part of a comprehensive solution to coal phase-out by 2030 and net zero grid by 2035, including implementation of a clean electricity regulation that achieves emissions goals while maintaining electricity

affordability and reducing energy poverty. This systems perspective requires that regulatory timelines be matched with equally aggressive complementary measures, including significant:

1. Re-capitalization of the Smart Renewables and Electrification Pathways Program (SREPs) to ensure the Atlantic Loop negotiations include investments in in-province renewables alongside transmission.
2. Further funding for building retrofit and off-oil programs to maintain affordability and reduce energy poverty while making important infrastructure investments.
3. Integration of program implementation to deliver on the potential to increase the size of the electricity system to meet electrification needs, while ensuring household energy bills go down. Achieving this outcome means ensuring a commitment to an appropriate balance in taxpayer versus ratepayer funded investments, household as a system programming including retrofits and vehicles to ensure household energy bills decline while we electrify.
4. Consideration of [community acceptability](#) of specific projects by requiring best practice standards for community engagement and community benefits agreements.

Ministers, we applaud the Government's commitment to decarbonizing the electricity grid. We do, however, urge stronger integration of policy, program and investments to ensure electrification does not come at the expense of provinces, ratepayers or the poor. We look forward to working with you to ensure an outcome over the next few months that delivers on our potential for greenhouse gas reduction, but also social acceptance.

Respectfully,



Dr. Louise Comeau

Director Climate Change Solutions

Atlantic Electricity Vision: <https://www.conservationcouncil.ca/about-the-atlantic-electricity-vision/>



Director of Programs

Ecology Action Centre

Cc: Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Serge Dupont, Privy Council Office
Jay Khosla, Privy Council Office

Appendix

Utilities need to make decisions over the next few years about how to supply electricity to customers. Please indicate how strongly you support or oppose the following electricity supply options in your community or region. You'll notice that there is a not sure option, but we encourage you to only use it if you really don't have an opinion. **Results October 2022: Strongly support, support (n = 2,000)**

Energy Source	BC	AB	SK/MN	ON	QC	NB	NFLD	NS	PEI
Onshore wind	68%	41%	59%	56%	48%	58%	65%	75%	41%
Offshore wind	67%	45%	52%	57%	51%	55%	67%	74%	34%
SMRs	26%	27%	33%	39%	16%	34%	25%	18%	16%
Rooftop solar	80%	57%	71%	71%	65%	70%	67%	79%	39%
Large-scale solar	70%	55%	65%	68%	66%	63%	66%	74%	35%
Hydro dams in my prov	65%	45%	43%	58%	51%	45%	56%	49%	22%
Import from outside prov	16%	16%	9%	21%	17%	14%	7%	19%	19%
Efficiency savings	52%	60%	60%	62%	55%	48%	50%	58%	58%
Biomass electricity	22%	14%	36%	20%	20%	17%	21%	27%	7%
Biomass DES	6%	4%	23%	7%	12%	5%	11%	10%	0%
Gas CCUS	21%	48%	40%	34%	17%	16%	23%	24%	12%
Oil CCUS	18%	52%	39%	23%	14%	18%	26%	22%	7%
Coal CCUS	11%	31%	30%	17%	11%	10%	16%	18%	6%