

Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians

A collection of texts in response to

*Acting on Climate Change:
Solutions from Canadian Scholars*,

a consensus document released in March 2015



Faculty of
Science



Regroupement national
des conseils régionaux
de l'environnement

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

REGROUPEMENT NATIONAL DES CONSEILS RÉGIONAUX DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT DU QUÉBEC

PHILIPPE BOURKE AND CEDRIC CHAPERON

RNCREQ: A unique network of influential players in the environmental field in Quebec

The 16 regional environmental councils of Quebec (*Conseils régionaux de l'environnement* or "CREs") are non-profit organizations involved in protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development in every region of Quebec (except the Far North). They are known for their operational approach centred on consultation and solution-orientation.

The Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement (RNCREQ) has the task of representing all the CREs and issuing public opinions on their behalf. The RNCREQ works on most major environmental issues and is known for its rigorous actions.

The CREs and their associated groups are particularly engaged in the fight against climate change. Their actions, research and stances in the field have helped advance Quebec society, fuel debate and influence decisions.

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**OPENING PANEL OF
THE QUEBEC ENERGY FORUM HELD
IN SHAWINIGAN IN NOVEMBER 2011.
MORE THAN 150 ORGANIZATIONS
HAVE SIGNED THE DECLARATION
OF COMMITMENT FOR AN OIL
DEPENDENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY.**

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3.3. Cibles et réductions annuelles

12. Il est à noter que dans les années 1970, malgré tout la durée de vie s'est étendue sur plusieurs années. Le parc automobile ne peut être modifié et est sujet à une certaine inertie. Lanoue et Mousseau évoquent un taux de renouvellement annuel du parc automobile de 10% (1970) d'action soutenue, qui suppose une diminution annuelle de 6 % des véhicules en circulation et une électrification de 2% du taux actuel de renouvellement.

Par notre propre énergie

IN NOVEMBER 2014 RNCREQ
RELEASED ITS FIRST STUDY
ON THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS
OF REDUCING OIL CONSUMPTION
IN QUEBEC, CALLED **VINGT MILLIARDS**
DE DOLLARS DE PLUS EN SIX ANS.

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THE EXHIBIT HALL OF THE QUEBEC ENERGY FORUM HELPED HIGHLIGHT SPECIFIC OIL CONSUMPTION REDUCTION INITIATIVES.

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PHILIPPE BOURKE, CEO OF RNCREQ, UNVEILING THE STUDY ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REDUCING OIL CONSUMPTION IN QUEBEC DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

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At the Crossroads

Contribution of the RNCREQ to Sustainable Canada Dialogue's Consensus Paper, *Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars*

Original text in French available at www.sustainablecanadadialogues.ca/fr/vert/versundialogue

Par notre PROPRE énergie: An original and effective strategic approach to fighting climate change

Climate change is unfortunately not a cause for which people are willing to make major sacrifices. To mobilize people to action, they must be brought "to see the reduction of greenhouse gases as an opportunity to make a better life, without emissions, by means of a societal project"¹.

This is the strategy CREs have put into practice since 2010: fight climate change without framing the challenge in terms of emissions. Thanks to support from the Government of Quebec and many other partners, the CREs have coordinated a regional approach to reducing oil dependence:

1 Bérubé, C. (2010). Changements climatiques et distorsion de la perception des Québécois : de la communication à l'action, Essai pour la maîtrise en environnement (M. Env.), sous la direction de Maria del Rosario Ortiz Quijan, Université de Sherbrooke, page i. Texte original en français : (*la population à voir en la réduction de gaz à effet de serre (GES) une opportunité de faire une meilleure vie, sans émissions, par l'entremise d'un projet de société*).

first with *Les Rendez-vous de l'énergie*², then with *Par notre PROPRE énergie*³. Because oil consumption in Quebec constitutes the province's main source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the original strategy of CREs helps effectively fight climate change.

Par notre propre énergie

Regional actors involved in this strategy have quickly understood that oil dependence is worrisome, and that it's possible to act quickly and effectively to reduce that dependence. Rather than focussing on long-term benefits for the climate, this approach is more concrete and immediate economic, social and environmental benefits are put forward. Additionally, this territorial approach is based on local players' need to opt for actions that are adapted to reflect their own

2 <http://www.rncreq.org/projets/archives?projet=9>

3 <http://www.par-notre-propre-energie.com>

regional reality, both geographically and socio-economically.

More concretely, *Par notre PROPRE énergie* is a unique approach to national mobilization that unfolds at the regional level. It aims to create the conditions to engage Quebec toward significantly reducing its oil use, allowing the Province to profit from the economic, social and environmental benefits that result.

The approach relies on the commitment of organizations and individuals who are empowered to act and exert influence in their fields, and who have development of their region at heart. The CREs bring them together in "regional tables" that allow cross-sectoral exchanges, a common understanding of the issues and identification and implementation of the most promising actions.

In short, *Par notre PROPRE énergie* is a structured long-term planning approach based on regional variation, consultation and participation.

It should be noted that this type of territorial approach to fighting climate change is increasingly recognized and promoted, as evidenced by the final declaration⁴ of the World Summit Climate and Territories⁵, held in Lyon July 1-2, 2015.

Objectives:

- To mobilize stakeholders
- To promote and encourage initiatives that propose concrete alternatives to the use of oil
- To promote integration of oil consumption

⁴ http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/declaration_world_summit_climate_territories.pdf

⁵ <http://en.rhonealpes.fr/1197-world-climate-summit-2015-en.htm>

issues into local and regional development processes

- To implement actions conducive to reducing oil consumption

In every region of Quebec, *Par notre PROPRE énergie* is:

- a "regional table" for reduction of oil consumption
- a regional energy diagnostic behind...
- ... a regional action plan for reducing oil consumption
- implementation of projects conducive to reducing oil consumption in a number of sectors including transport, land use planning, industry, agriculture, buildings, and others.

Deployment of the Approach

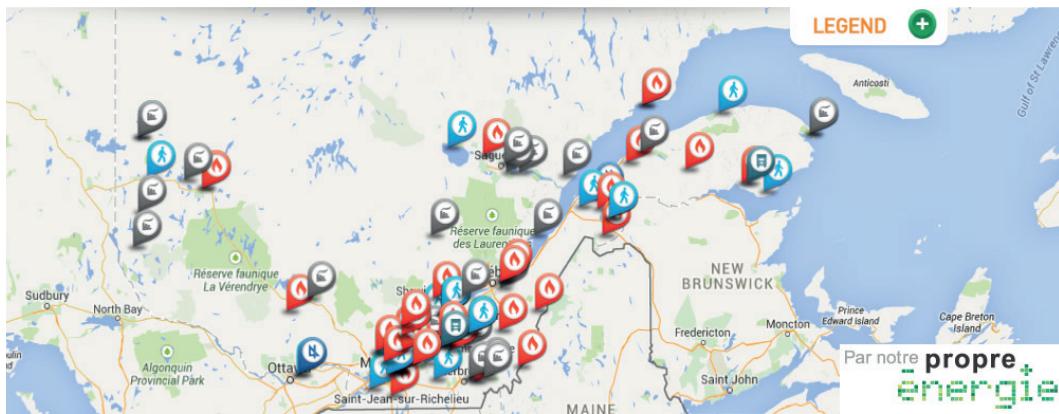
Over 300 organizations are represented at the regional tables. From action plans they have devised for each region, more than 60 strategic projects of oil consumption reduction have already been initiated throughout Quebec in several sectors: transport of people and goods, land use planning, industry, agriculture, buildings, and more (see Figure 1).

Encourage Action by Highlighting the Collateral Benefits - Particularly on the Economy

The RNCREQ commissioned an economic study⁶ that evaluates benefits to the Quebec economy of an oil consumption reduction strategy, and measures the impact of such a strategy on public finances and household

⁶ <http://www.par-notre-propre-energie.com/etude.php>

Figure 1. Quebec's oil consumption reduction initiatives by region or sector
(map available at www.par-notre-propre-energie.com)



An interactive map at www.par-notre-propre-energie.com lets users discover Quebec's oil consumption reduction initiatives by region or sector. In each case, a textbox links to a project description and quantification of its energy savings and GHG reductions, as well as other social and environmental benefits.

budgets. The objective is to reinforce other generally recognized benefits of reduced oil consumption such as energy security, health or the fight against climate change.

The study shows that a moderate approach to oil consumption reduction would generate gains of about \$2.3 billion in 2015 on the trade balance, which would gradually increase to \$4.3 billion in 2020. For the six years covered by the study, these gains would total \$19.7 billion. Over the same period, it would result in 130 000 direct and indirect jobs annually.

In terms of Quebec's public finances, even taking into account the decrease in revenues from gasoline tax, a moderate approach would clear a total revenue of \$900 million over six years.

Finally, from a household perspective, reducing oil consumption by choosing more efficient vehicles would generate savings of around \$2100 to \$4300 per household per year, enough to almost double the average

household budget for leisure activities.

Time for Canada to Act

The RNCREQ generally endorses the policy orientations set out in *Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars*. According to the RNCREQ, these orientations gather the basic elements needed to develop a robust action plan to fight climate change. As Mr. Raphals and Mr. Hendriks of Helios Centre suggest in their contribution to *Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians*, however, the RNCREQ believes the report's commitment to the growth of hydropower generation should be analyzed with caution because of associated economic, social and environmental risks.

As a collective, the RNCREQ deems that Canada must quickly take action to significantly reduce global GHG emissions. This will require significant efforts.

Conditions for Successful Implementation of a Climate Change Action Plan

Drawing on its experience in the implementation of actions against climate change, the RNCREQ believes that achievement of objectives and targets set by *Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars* will depend in particular on our ability to meet the following three conditions:

1. Recognizing the extent of the challenges and opportunities

The changes in behaviour that such a plan should prompt are of unprecedented magnitude. All Canadians should be directly called upon to make necessary changes to their habits and behaviour: finding other ways to travel; modifying urban planning practices; designing more energy-efficient buildings; increasing efficiency of production; making responsible consumer choices, and so on.

Yet, as we know, it's not easy to change behaviour. Consequently, these issues should be tackled head-on. Practical ways to address behaviour should be proposed, for example, use of powerful deterrence messages such as those associated with campaigns against smoking, drunk-driving and speeding.

That said, Canada is fortunate to have invaluable assets that let us predict positive change – notably our potential for renewable energy production. This potential is what can inspire and mobilize the population and socio-economic actors.

2. Encouraging adherence

There must be a major communication and awareness campaign *before* implementing a climate change action plan so that the population understands the issues and adheres to the pursued objectives. We must

succeed in showing citizens that these reforms are in their interest and they will reap many benefits, such as:

- they will be healthier
- they will have more money in their pocket
- it will be easier and more pleasant to travel
- public finances will be in a better state
- they will be proud of what they have accomplished.

This campaign should be designed to promote behaviours that will henceforth be perceived as smart and trendy by citizens: saving energy; relying less on cars; showing restraint; and participating in a collective effort. Complex issues will have to be communicated using simple and clear messages.

Furthermore, an awareness campaign would reduce resistance to the inevitable and necessary constraints that would have to be imposed to encourage behavioural changes (regulations, taxes, tolls, standards, etc.). This would also particularly help counter the tendency that some have to negatively perceive reductions in energy consumption (since this concept is economically counterintuitive).

This campaign should continue throughout the period of implementation of a climate change action plan.

3. Appropriate governance instruments

A shift as important as the one called for (increasing autonomy, reducing GHG emissions, making energy efficiency a cornerstone of Canada's economic development, facing the challenge of transport, and so on) is inconceivable without determining who will be responsible for implementing

these reforms and which governance structures need to be modified or put in place.

For the proposed reforms to be realized, we must constantly ensure the decisions taken by all relevant institutions (federal and provincial ministers, municipalities,

producers and distributors of energy, and others) are in the desired direction. The roles, responsibilities and powers of each should be reviewed to ensure they act consistently and without creating interferences or unnecessary obstacles.

References

Climate Change

Par notre PROPRE énergie (PNPÉ) approach, <http://www.par-notre-propre-energie.com/index.php>

Study on the economic impact of reduced oil consumption in Quebec, http://www.par-notre-propre-energie.com/pdf/RNCREQ_Corrections_Brochure_etude_economique_interieur_LR.pdf

Regional fact sheets on climate change adaptation, <http://www.rncreq.org/projets/fiches-adaptation>

Energy

RNCREQ Statement on consultation on energy issues in Quebec, http://www.rncreq.org/images/UserFiles/files/2013-09-24_M%C3%A9moire_ConsultationEEQ_final.pdf

RNCREQ Statement on the reversal of Enbridge Pipeline 9B, http://www.rncreq.org/images/UserFiles/files/2013-11-29_M%C3%A9moire_Enbridge_final.pdf

RNCREQ Energy platform, http://www.rncreq.org/images/UserFiles/files/Plateforme_energie_RNCREQ_2013_finale.pdf



ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

SUSTAINABLE CANADA DIALOGUES

This contribution is part of a collection of texts, *Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians*, stemming from interactions between Sustainable Canada Dialogues, an initiative of the UNESCO-McGill Chair for Dialogues on Sustainability, and business associations, First Nations, non-governmental organizations, labour groups, institutions, organizations and private citizens.

Sustainable Canada Dialogues is a voluntary initiative that mobilizes over 60 researchers from every province in Canada, representing disciplines across engineering, sciences and social sciences. We are motivated by a shared view that putting options on the table will stimulate action and is long overdue in Canada.

Together, the contributions enrich the scope of possible solutions and show that Canada is brimming with ideas, possibilities and the will to act. The views expressed in *Acting on Climate Change: Extending the Dialogue Among Canadians* are those of the contributors, and are not necessarily endorsed by Sustainable Canada Dialogues.

We thank all contributors for engaging in this dialogue with us to help reach a collective vision of desired pathways to our futures.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE

sustainablecanadadialogues.ca/en/scd/acting-on-climate-change