

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



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We have no choice but to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

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Last year many international reports called for the urgent need to reduce GHG emissions. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report (November 2019), found that we now need to reduce global emissions by 7.6 % every year from 2020 to 2030. This means emissions must drop rapidly to 25 gigatons by 2030, but based on today's world commitments, emissions are on track to reach 56 Gt CO₂e by 2030, over twice what they should be. The report states Governments cannot afford to wait, people and families cannot afford to wait, economies must shift to a decarbonization pathway now.

Canada is warming at twice the global rate, a Canadian report found last year. Natural disasters are becoming more common and more severe in BC. Our Elders are keeping telling us that mother earth is being hurt and that is threatening all ways of life. Reducing emissions -so the next generation could enjoy this planet as we do now- is a big challenge that demands collective efforts.

In the era of reconciliation, First Nations -as Title and Right holders- are continuing to demand a seat at the table with the government to make decisions together that reflect First Nations' values and principles. These values and principles come from thousands of years of knowledge passed down, and of learning to live with reciprocity and respect in our respective Territories. Some steps have been made in British Columbia such as the passing of the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People Act*, but this is just the beginning. Much work is still needed to ensure that governments respectfully and meaningfully engage First Nations in all the climate initiatives that have been developed (and are being developed) in British Columbia.

BCAFN, as mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, will continue advocating for recognition and securing First Nations' rightful place at the decision-making table, including in the development of legislation, policies and plans to help Canada to reduce GHG emissions, while adapting to the inevitable climate impacts.

Patricia Rojas
Regional Climate Change Coordinator
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