

**Mailing Address**

PO Box 1372  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3N9

**Office**

204-220 20th Street West  
Saskatoon, SK

☎ 306.665.1915

☎ 306.955.5852

info@environmentalsociety.ca

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**Press Release**

Saskatchewan Environmental Society

Friday, April 22, 2016

For immediate release

**Two largest cities in SK urged to become carbon neutral**

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) is celebrating the signing of an international climate change agreement in New York today, and is encouraging Saskatchewan's two largest cities to play a major leadership role in making the key principles of the climate agreement a reality in our province.

"We are delighted this international climate change agreement is being officially signed by so many countries within just four months of being negotiated" said SES Board member Bob Halliday. "It reflects the growing international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The new climate change agreement offers hope for every citizen on Earth."

The new agreement commits all signatory nations to work to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by pursuing efforts "to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change." To put this in context, global average temperature is already at 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. A new global average temperature record high was set in 2014, then broken in 2015. Now the first three months of 2016 have set new record highs once again, a trend not seen in the 137 years that global temperature records have been kept.

"It is essential to recognize that the global average temperature target in the new climate change agreement cannot be reached unless fossil fuels are phased out worldwide over the next 35-40 years" SES Board Member Sarina Gersher said. "This is widely acknowledged by the international climate science community. If we want to protect the quality of life we have on our home planet, our task must be to virtually eliminate man-made greenhouse gas emissions over the course of my lifetime."

The latest data released this week shows that our province-wide greenhouse gas emissions have risen to a new high – for the first time exceeding 75 million tonnes released into the atmosphere in a single 12 month period. SES has encouraged the provincial government for strong climate action, and today we are encouraging our cities to help. We urge Saskatoon and Regina to set targets to become carbon neutral cities by 2050 – in other words to make a central goal to become cities in which fossil fuels use is no longer necessary because fossil fuels have been replaced with safe renewable forms of energy, and because energy is being used much more efficiently than is the case today."



“If Saskatoon and Regina are going to do their share in implementing the new international climate change agreement, there needs to be a clear plan for progress in the decade ahead” said Sarina Gersher. Community wide greenhouse gas emissions need to drop by at least one third in the next 10 years, setting the stage for further orderly reductions in the years ahead. “The Saskatchewan Environmental Society has identified six important places to start.”

The SES encourages Saskatoon and Regina to lead the way by:

- adopting responsible, ambitious energy efficiency standards for all new house construction.
- accelerating the application of solar technology within their jurisdictions to reduce electricity produced from coal and natural gas.
- sharply increasing their future investments in facilitating active transportation, including better transit services, and more bicycle and walking infrastructure.
- adopting strict energy efficiency standards for all new industrial operations that locate within their jurisdiction.
- developing a new walkable neighbourhood that is 100% carbon neutral. Such a neighbourhood should feature new homes that are so energy efficient that they do not need space heating, and that meet their electricity needs solely with renewable power.
- making LED lighting standard in every neighbourhood and adopting local bylaws to curb over-lit signs.

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### **Saskatchewan Environmental Society**

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) is a non-profit, registered charity whose mandate is to work towards a world in which all needs be met in sustainable ways. SES has been active in Saskatchewan since 1970. We work on issues such as sustainable energy and climate solutions, water protection, biodiversity preservation, and reduction of toxic substances.