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PRESS RELEASE

Saskatchewan Environmental Society

Friday, September 25, 2020

For immediate release

Environmental Initiatives in the Federal Throne Speech Offer Opportunities for Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society welcomes several of the Government of Canada's Throne Speech commitments on the environment. The plan to protect one quarter of Canada's land and oceans in the next five years is particularly important, as is the plan to create thousands of new jobs by helping homeowners and businesses to undertake energy efficiency retrofits.

At the present time only 10% of Saskatchewan's land area has protected status, so federal efforts to increase that percentage would be welcome and an important step in protecting our province's biodiversity. In Saskatchewan, the southern part of the Great Sand Hills (the largest remaining block of native prairie in Canada), and the Saskatchewan portion of the Saskatchewan River Delta (the largest inland delta in North America and a critical natural storehouse for carbon) should be prime candidates for protection. Protection efforts should maximize employment opportunities for local people and should always be undertaken in close consultation with local people.

The federal government's energy efficiency retrofit announcement is welcome because there is currently no Saskatchewan government program to promote home energy efficiency retrofits or retrofits in the commercial sector. This has long been a missing component of Saskatchewan's climate action plan, known as *Prairie Resilience*. Energy efficiency retrofits are an excellent way of creating jobs, since the work is very labour intensive, and they are a concrete way of reducing energy costs for Saskatchewan building owners, while at the same time cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society also welcomes the Throne Speech announcement of a Clean Power Fund that will connect regions of Canada that have surplus clean power to regions transitioning away from coal. Saskatchewan currently relies on coal for meeting more than 40% of its electricity demand. We urge the Government of Canada to use its proposed Clean Power Fund to offer Saskatchewan financial assistance in building the needed transmission capacity to permit major hydro imports from Manitoba, thus helping our province to phase out its conventional coal fired power stations - a major source of greenhouse gas pollution. By 2030 only the carbon-capture coal-fired unit at Boundary Dam, with its lower carbon footprint, should continue operating.

Transportation accounts for 14% of Saskatchewan's greenhouse gas emissions. The federal government's Throne Speech commitment to make low-emissions vehicles more affordable and to invest in more electric vehicle charging stations in our province and across the country is thus positive news. For electric vehicles in Saskatchewan to truly be low emission vehicles, they will need to be charged with solar power and other forms of renewable energy. Facilitating that needs to be a high priority for both Ottawa and the Saskatchewan government.



Celebrating
50 YEARS

Finally, the Saskatchewan Environmental Society supports the announcement that the Government of Canada will move quickly to bring forward a plan to exceed Canada's 2030 climate goal. That goal currently aims to achieve a 30% reduction in national greenhouse gas emissions when compared to 2005 emission levels.

The Secretary General of the United Nations has been warning national governments that climate change risks are accelerating and has emphasized that an emissions reduction of 45% by 2030 is required to meet Paris Agreement targets and to avoid the most dangerous effects of climate change. The destruction from the unprecedented wildfires in Oregon, California, Australia and Siberia in 2020 reminds us that there is no time left to delay – a more ambitious agenda to cut greenhouse gas emissions is urgently needed in Canada and around the world.

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society is therefore pleased Ottawa is signaling a willingness to take more ambitious climate action and urges the Saskatchewan government to fully co-operate. At 76.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year, Saskatchewan's pollution levels are presently three and one-half times the Canadian average and nine times the global average, for our population size. Such pollution levels exceed those of entire northern countries such as Norway and Sweden and are incompatible with a livable planet.

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Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) is a non-profit, registered charity that is committed to supporting sustainable living and sustainable resource use in Saskatchewan. We work with, and on behalf of, communities, organizations, businesses and policy makers to encourage informed decision-making that moves us towards sustainability. SES's current action areas include sustainable energy and climate solutions, water protection, resource conservation, biodiversity preservation, and reduction of toxic substances. Our work in Saskatchewan spans Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and our office is located in Saskatoon on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional territory of Cree Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

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