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Press Release

Saskatchewan Environmental Society

Friday, October 7, 2016

For immediate release

Carbon pricing opens opportunities

On October 5, 2016, the United Nations announced that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change had met the minimum requirements for entry-into-force; at least 55 countries accounting for 55% of the world's emissions have formally joined the agreement resulting from COP21. On the same day, Canada voted to ratify the Paris Agreement, joining the United States, India, China, and 69 other countries. The international agreement will formally come into force November 4, 2016.

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society is very pleased to see the progress that has been made on this global climate change agreement. The exceptional speed at which countries around the world have come together to ratify this agreement highlights the urgency of the task at hand: to lower global concentrations of greenhouse gas emissions. Just one week ago, scientists announced levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere reached 400 parts per million, an unprecedented level in human history. It is essential that governments in all regions take meaningful action to lower greenhouse gas emissions and limit global average temperature rise to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Meeting this objective is the only way to prevent the most catastrophic consequences of climate change from occurring.

Canada has indicated it intends to take seriously the challenge posed by climate change. On October 2, the Prime Minister announced plans to introduce a carbon price in Canada. Saskatchewan and other regions of Canada have two years to develop a cap and trade or pricing mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If no such mechanism has been put into place by 2018, a price of \$10/tonne on carbon will be initiated at the federal level.

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society views this announcement as a tremendous opportunity for Saskatchewan to take serious action on climate change in cooperation with other provinces and full support from the federal government. Now is our time to develop a market mechanism that will reduce emissions and work for Saskatchewan people and businesses.



“We believe the federal announcement allows our province the flexibility to design a pricing policy that can use revenue recycling to facilitate household transfers, invest in low-carbon technology, or provide transitional support to industry, while simultaneously reducing emissions,” said Hayley Carlson, SES Policy Coordinator.

A carbon pricing scheme will be most successful when paired with a suite of other policy initiatives designed to reduce emissions across a range of sectors. Regulations such as targeting fugitive methane releases from venting and flaring or mandating a phase-out from coal-fired power plants would lower emissions from the oil and gas and electricity sectors in Saskatchewan. Investments in electricity conservation and renewable energy options as well as financial assistance for home energy efficiency retrofits will ensure Saskatchewan people and businesses have low carbon options available.

“Saskatchewan needs to develop a proactive strategy to accomplish an orderly transition to a low carbon economy,” said Ann Coxworth, SES researcher and board member. “We hope to see the government work closely with industry, researchers, and other groups to develop a pricing scheme that will lead to positive environmental outcomes and incentivize a sustainable energy transition.”

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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 are 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, resource conservation and management, biodiversity preservation, reduction of toxic substances, and sustainability planning.

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