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## PRESS RELEASE

Saskatchewan Environmental Society

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For immediate release

### The Saskatchewan Environmental Society urges for stronger action on climate change in our province

The Saskatchewan government is ignoring the environmental realities of the world around us and the advice of the scientific community as it seeks to overturn every major Canadian government climate change initiative. In a province that is vulnerable to floods, drought, and forest fires and that relies on Rocky Mountain runoff to supply the rivers we depend on, this is difficult to comprehend. Our province has so much to lose if climate breakdown occurs, yet our provincial government continues to embrace policies destined to destabilize the climate in irreversible ways.

Every citizen on Earth depends on climate stability to meet basic needs. That is now very much in jeopardy. **More and more parts of the world are experiencing temperatures that threaten human life.** Las Vegas just went through five consecutive days over 45°C. New Delhi recorded its highest ever temperature at 49°C. The temperature at the Tepache weather station in northwest Mexico reached 52°C last month. At a global level, **2023 was the hottest year on record in 174 years** of record-keeping. Official reports now confirm that the 12-month period from **July 2023 to June 2024 was even hotter.** Here in Saskatchewan, we struggle when temperatures reach the mid-thirties. How will we cope when summer temperatures regularly meet 40 degrees in the future?

And the impacts here at home go beyond just heat. For example:

- **Last year in Saskatchewan, a forested area five times the size of Prince Albert National Park burned.** Across Canada over 200,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes because of forest fires.
- **Flows in the South Saskatchewan River in 2023 were near record lows in over 100 years of records,** challenging irrigators in both Saskatchewan and our neighbouring Alberta.
- **In the last three years, the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation needed to provide more than \$6 billion in insurance claims and benefits to producers.** This has been necessary primarily because of drought and other forms of extreme weather. We are fortunate to have had much better rains in Saskatchewan this year, but that is likely to be short lived. If greenhouse gas pollution is not rapidly reduced, global heating will bring devastating droughts to our province.

With the benefit of the scientific community, we are now fully aware of why all this is happening. These extreme weather events are caused by the greenhouse gas pollution associated with the burning of coal, oil



and natural gas, and by the cutting down of our forests. Sadly, Saskatchewan's greenhouse gas emissions contribute every day to the unfolding danger that lies ahead. The latest data now places Saskatchewan's annual greenhouse gas pollution at 76 million tonnes per year – an unbelievably high number for just 1.2 million people. This is at a time when our provincial government advertises itself as environmentally sustainable. Saskatchewan's province-wide greenhouse gas pollution levels are five times higher than the province of Nova Scotia with its 1,050,000 people. Saskatchewan's emissions are also nine times higher than the world average. They are completely unsustainable and primarily stem from irresponsible provincial policies.

In the face of the climate emergency, we have watched the following happen here at home:

1. **The Saskatchewan government is allowing increased clear cutting of our boreal forest.** Based on Saskatchewan's Growth Plan and Forest Management area plans, the provincial government's goal is "to double the growth of Saskatchewan's forestry sector by 2030." This is the opposite of what the scientific community recommends if climate breakdown is to be avoided. The boreal forest is an extremely important carbon sink, and we must work to protect it.
2. **The Saskatchewan government is targeting a 25% increase in oil production in Saskatchewan,** the exact opposite of what the International Energy Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommend if catastrophic climate impacts are to be avoided.
3. **The Saskatchewan government refuses to comply with federal oil and gas methane regulations,** which mandates the reduction of methane emissions by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030. While the provincial government has made some reductions to methane emissions through improved regulations, its claims about the level of reduction achieved are inaccurate. Carleton University has clearly demonstrated that methane emissions from Saskatchewan's heavy oil production in the Lloydminster area are almost four times higher than industry reports them to be.
4. **The Saskatchewan government has announced it will not phase out its conventional coal-fired power stations by 2030,** despite much better power generation options being available. We are the only province refusing to cooperate with the federal government's regulations requiring coal phase-out. Ongoing coal use worldwide guarantees climate catastrophe.
5. **The Saskatchewan government is opposing the federal government's Clean Electricity Regulations and is saying it will not achieve a net-zero emissions power grid until 2050.** That again flies in the face of what the International Energy Agency and the scientific community recommends. SaskPower's leisurely approach to greenhouse gas emissions reduction has led to only modest commitments to installed capacity for renewable power and to emissions reduction by 2030. Achieving a clean electricity grid at least 15 years in advance is a prerequisite for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050; therefore, moving to a low-emission electricity grid by 2035 throughout the industrialized world, including Saskatchewan, is essential.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. If left unchecked, climate change will disrupt economies, exacerbate storms and disasters, and adversely affect lives and livelihoods, especially for the most vulnerable. We will all feel the impacts and we must all be part of the solution, including here in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan government needs to change its course and begin taking climate change seriously. It is time to act swiftly and courageously to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Doing nothing will cost much more than if we act now.



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*SES spokespersons on this press release are board members Margret Asmuss, Bob Halliday, and Peter Prebble.*

**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 is carried out in Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and our office is in Saskatoon on Treaty 6, the traditional territory of Cree Peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation.