

To: Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Honourable George Heyman

cc: Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Resilience, Honourable Bowinn Ma;  
Deputy Minister, Kevin Jardine; Assistant Deputy Minister, Jeremy Hewitt

March 27, 2023

Dear Minister Heyman,

**Re: Advice on 2023 Implementation of the BC Climate Preparedness Strategy**

The Council is encouraged by the government's increased focus on adaptation as reflected in mandate letters, Budget 2023, and formation of the new ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, but more needs to be done. The paradigm needs to shift from disaster relief after the climate-related damages occur to a whole-of-government approach that increases the resilience of families, companies, and communities with actions and investments that reduce the likelihood of damage. Investment in climate resilience is more cost effective than disaster relief.

Looking to 2023 and beyond, the Council offers the following as priority areas for accelerated action in line with the government's mandate letters and budget commitments.

- a) Accelerate the implementation of actions in CPAS 2022-2025 with attributed budgets, funding, and timelines that are **commensurate with BC's climate risks** to be publicly communicated in the next Climate Change Accountability Report.
- b) Develop an explicit, measurable, and ambitious series of **climate adaptation targets** that are cross-sector, take a whole-of-government approach, and that align with Indigenous values, worldviews, and priorities.
- c) Continue to enhance **the Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment process** with clear and regular communication with communities of the risks identified, prioritization of funding, planned investments, and policy development. Incorporate local and Indigenous knowledge in the assessment process to enhance understanding of climate risks, how they are distributed in communities, and ways of increasing resilience.
- d) Align mandates, policies, regulations, and budgets at all levels of government (including with the National Adaptation Strategy) and relevant agencies to leverage their full insights, authorities, and capacities to **advance resilience for B.C.'s most salient hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities.**

The Council believes that targets are an effective tool in the delivery of smarter, swifter, and more comprehensive actions to support climate adaptation and resilience. Targets help in communicating actions and progress with the public. It is recognized though that targets, and their ongoing monitoring and evaluation, are challenging aspects of adaptation planning. As the Canadian Climate Institute has highlighted, targets help ensure that monitoring and evaluation of climate adaptation does not simply become a 'progress reporting' exercise on policy commitments, but rather a material and dynamic evaluation of the province's exposure and progress toward reducing climate-related hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities. We offer for consideration a set of principles and best practices to support the development explicit, measurable, and ambitious series of climate adaptation targets.

## **Principles for Setting Adaptation Targets**

Effective targets must be well-thought out, aligned to budgets and resources, work cross-ministerially, and have a clear connection to the desired end-state of outcomes, not just outputs. For example, the percentage of communities with flood-plain mapping completed is an output. An outcome is the percentage of communities that have had flood risk reduced (and by what extent).

- Scenario planning is a useful tool in setting targets. It should be empirically grounded in climate impact projections scaled appropriately to B.C. and its regions. Scenarios need to encompass the expected range of climate impacts from worst to best cases and estimates of their likelihood.
- Align with and support the British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (BC DRIPA) incorporating “two-eyed seeing” to integrate different ways of knowing.
- Incorporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations along with the economic/financial assessments.
- Include systems-level, e.g., BC’s provincial and local government fiscal capacity to prepare for and respond to climate-related extreme events as well as community-and/or individual-level considerations (e.g., site-level resilience and adaptability to hazards).
- Direct and inform work across the whole of government with responsibilities integrated into Mandate Letters and Ministerial and agency-level service plans.
- Align with and support the National Adaptation Strategy.

## **Principles for Monitoring, Evaluation and Data Collection**

The current monitoring and evaluation framework for CPAS breaks down the four key pathways into objectives, outcomes, indicators, targets, and metrics. Data collection relevant to adaptation is nascent in many respects and we encourage government to work with local governments and many businesses to leverage opportunities created by their growing capacity. Linkages with national data initiatives such as 440 Megatonnes and the Climate Atlas can link BC’s work with the rest of Canada. The province’s own recent work on ESG-related reporting may also be instructive.

Through their best practices research, the Canadian Climate Institute has recommended utilizing the following four building blocks in an integrated way for any effective adaptation monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system:

1. Context – clearly state the mandate, purpose, and scope of the M&E undertaken.
2. Content – clearly state the substance of what is being assessed.
3. Operationalization – create effective systems to collect and disseminate data within, across, and outside of government.
4. Communication – create audience-specific, well-timed, ongoing diffusion of climate adaptation to inform better decisions across the public and private sectors.

The Council suggests the **following principles for monitoring, measuring, and collecting data:**

- Measurement, evaluation, and data collection should be inherently collaborative and integrative. It should include *cross-government* coordination as well as structured, effective, and ongoing collaboration with First Nations, local governments (e.g., amalgamating local governments’ Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability assessments), and businesses (e.g., financial climate risk disclosures).
- Measurement should strike a balance between short and long-term perspectives – for example, flood control-related infrastructure could include metrics related to annual infrastructure investment.

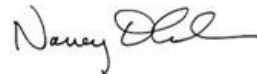
- Measurement and evaluation should take a whole-of-government approach and be integrated cross-ministerially (e.g., via an annual cross-government ‘stock take’ of adaptation metrics), with a particular emphasis on integration into budgetary considerations and Treasury Board submissions.
- Data-sharing and communication should be readily accessible and provide an avenue for data contributions from the public, local governments, and businesses with clear identification of the sources.

## Conclusion

The Climate Solutions Council is supportive of British Columbia’s adaptation strategy that strives to increase the resilience of the people, plants, and animals inhabiting the province and the natural systems that support life and wellbeing today and into the future. The work ahead will not be easy; it involves difficult decisions and significantly larger investments than those made to date. As we rebuild and heal in light of the climate disasters of the past two years, we believe that all sectors of society in this province are ready to take on this generational challenge. The Council looks forward to supporting you and the government on as we move forward on this vital work.



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