

## Canada's ?greenwash? on reducing greenhouse gases

By Skid Crease

The government of Canada declared March 15 that it was going to dedicate \$500 million to projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gases. Brilliant.

The year is 2018. It is 30 years since the alarm was sounded in Toronto by the World Meteorological Society. In this case, better late than never doesn't quite cut it.

But, if there is any good day to celebrate Canada's Greenwashing, it surely was on St. Patrick's Day.

Environment Minister Catherine McKenna says the government's Low Carbon Economy Challenge will hand out the \$500 million over the next four years to fund projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while also saving energy and creating green jobs.

I have a couple of suggestions.

First, put the \$500 million into a Precautionary Principles Fund for mitigating the coming flood, drought, fire, ice storm, Arctic thaw, and coastal erosion insurance claims. Secondly, if you really want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, suspend all developments in the tar sands.

Thirdly, close all coal fired electricity plants, fourthly stop extracting oil and fracking gas, and finally convert fossil fuel company dinosaurs into 21st century renewable energy corporations.

It is making me gag to hear our government offer \$500 million to explore solutions that were proposed thirty years ago. It's like gun violence ? the solution is easy. Control the guns! You want to significantly reduce greenhouse gases? Then shut down the industries that produce excessive greenhouse gases and don't approve projects like Trans Mountain Pipeline that encourage more fossil fuel use! You want to stop violence against women? Expose and #MeToo the heck out of stupid, abusive men!

This is the KISS principle, consensual of course, for environmental literacy.

Your community wants clean water? Don't dump toxic chemicals or sewage into the watershed. I'm sure Grassy Narrows would have appreciated that private corporation requirement with stringent government oversight and enforcement instead of a lazy blind eye. Don't reward people with a \$500 million taxpayer bailout when they are so environmentally illiterate that they don't realize it's not a good idea to defecate in the community well. ?Doctor, it hurts when I do this.? ?Well then, stop doing that!?

Canada stands tall on the world stage, represented by wonderful and well-meaning people, lauded in the myth of our green environmental standing by dint of our tiny global population. But per capita, we are major players in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

This is not my opinion alone. Try this from a November 2017 news report by Bob Weber of the Canadian Press for CBC:

?To an international diplomat, the irony is painful ? the country that promised action on climate change is falling behind while the country that has spurned a major treaty on the issue is making progress.

That's Canada and the United States, Angel Gurría, secretary-general of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, said Wednesday.

?It's a bit of a paradox, here,? Gurría told The Canadian Press. ?In Canada, you have a situation where you have a very strong political will to reduce, but effectively it has not gone on the planned road.

?In the United States, you have a government that has pulled out of the (Paris) agreement, but in the United States you are having a reduction in emissions.?

Gurría has high praise for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government's strong vocal support for climate change. Gurría said Trudeau made a real contribution to reaching the Paris deal in 2015 in which 169 countries promised to reduce their emissions enough to keep global warming under two degrees Celsius.

But when the signatories get together next year to take a look at each other's progress, Canada may not be so much in evidence.

?You have here a very proactive and decisive leadership moving in the direction of reduction of emissions, and a very active participant in the Paris agreement and a very active participant in the whole of the world's move,? said Gurría, who was in Toronto to speak at the Munk School at the University of Toronto.

?While at the same time, the local situation is showing that speed of reduction is not as fast as one would have wanted.?

Yes, Bob. Yes, Canada. Yes, Catherine. Not what we wanted by March 2018. And not worth \$500 million for a fast greenhouse gas wardrobe change. The train has already left the station.

Either shut down the big emitters or stop proselytizing. Our children are the first recognize hollow political promises and, like the students in Parkland, they want action, not a greenwash stuck in the spin cycle.

The way I see it.

Skid Crease is an accredited member of the Association of Canadian Journalists. He is an award-winning outdoor and environmental educator, a keynote speaker, a storyteller, an author, and a community volunteer. He taught with the North York and Toronto District School boards for 35 years, and officially 'retired' from the Faculty of Education, York University, where he was a Course Director and Environmental Science Advisor. Skid has worked with scientists from Environment Canada (pre-2005), NASA, and the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research in a quest to put an understandable story behind the wealth of their scientific data.