Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities

Part 1: Context
Part 2: Task Force
Part 3: Canada’s related programs

Presentation by Environment and Climate Change Canada
Part 1: Coal workers and communities in Canada

- Coal use has a long history in Canada
  - Indigenous Peoples
  - Settler use began in the 1600s
  - Whole new communities were built around it

- Nearly 50 communities continue to rely on thermal coal mining and coal power for local employment and taxes, which can form the majority of their municipal budget

COAL POWER IN CANADA

- 15 coal-fired generating stations
- 9 thermal coal mines
- 3,000 to 3,900 workers
  - Highly skilled workforce
  - Full-time, unionized jobs
  - Higher than average wages, health benefits, and pensions
MAP OF COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS AND THERMAL COAL MINES IN CANADA

Alberta
1. Battle River Generating Station
2. Genesee Generating Station
3. H.R. Milner Generating Station
4. Keplin's Generating Station
5. Sheerness Generating Station
6. Sundance Generating Station
7. Coal Valley Mine
8. Genesee Mine
9. Hiwas Mine
10. Panhandle Mine
11. Sheerness Mine

Saskatchewan
12. Boundary Dam Power Station
13. Poplar River Power Station
14. Shand Power Station
15. Estevan Mine
16. Poplar River Mine

New Brunswick
17. Galludude Generating Station
18. Coleson Cove Generating Station

Nova Scotia
19. Lingan Generating Station
20. Point Aconi Generating Station
21. Point Tupper Generating Station
22. Trenton Generating Station
23. Donkin Mine
24. Stellarton Mine

Source: Environment and Climate Change Canada
A KEY QUESTION IS HOW CAN WE SUPPORT THESE WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES AS WE PHASE OUT COAL-FIRED ELECTRICITY?
Part 2: Just Transition Task Force

To help answer this question, in 2018 Canada launched the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, comprised of representatives of labour, environmental groups, local government, and industry.

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<th>2015</th>
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<td>• Paris Agreement acknowledges just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs</td>
<td>• Canada recognizes the importance of providing Canadian workers with a just and fair transition</td>
<td>• Canada agrees to create the Task Force, following engagement with Canada's labour movement</td>
<td>• Canada launches the Task Force in April</td>
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<td>• Task Force delivers final report by December 31</td>
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The Task Force was responsible for providing knowledge, options and recommendations to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change on implementing a just transition for workers and communities directly impacted by the accelerated phase-out of coal fired electricity in Canada.
Mandate

A. **Engage** with relevant stakeholder groups, provinces, and municipal governments

B. Provide a summary of **what was heard**

C. Provide **options and recommendations** on what could be included in a just transition plan for coal power workers and communities

D. Provide options and recommendations to the Minister on **how to structure a subsequent phase of consultation** and analysis concerning just transition... for Canada to prosper throughout the global transition to a clean growth and low-carbon economy
A. Engagement

- Travelled to 4 provinces
- Visited 15 communities
- Toured 7 facilities
- Hosted 8 public town hall-style sessions
- Met with more than 80 stakeholder groups

The Task Force met with:
- workers and their families
- employers
- labour union representatives
- provinces
- municipalities
- community members
- business representatives
- non-governmental organizations
- other stakeholders
B. What Was Heard

Achieving a Just Transition means:

- Keeping workers working – in their communities
- Allowing for early retirement
- Making electricity secure and affordable
- Reducing the stress of financial uncertainty
- Helping communities thrive
- Communicating and collaborating openly and honestly

Each with common concerns and solutions from directly affected Canadians

Available online (linked)
Over **100 people** attended a meeting with the Task Force in Estevan (SK), and over **200 people** attended a meeting with the Task Force in Coronach (SK). They voiced their concerns about the transition, including the impacts on children, families, home values, and the overall future of their communities.

Our **community college** provides opportunities to retrain workers and gain transferable skills, but we need an active **industry** here for that to be possible.
- Community member, Bathurst, NB

Our population keeps getting old and we **can’t afford to lose any more families**. Young families don’t want to stay in our community anymore because there are fewer jobs.
- Resident, Trenton, NS

Planning is required to ensure that the low-carbon transition’s many benefits for health... are not offset by abrupt decreases in the **social determinants of health [caused by unemployment]**.
- Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
C. Recommendations for Coal Transition

“When putting in place environmental policies that impact Canadian workers and communities, governments must take responsibility for these adverse impacts and collaborate with stakeholders to find ways to minimize them.”

The Task Force made 10 recommendations across 3 interrelated areas:

1. Foundational
2. Workers
3. Communities
Foundational Recommendations

1. Develop, communicate, implement, monitor, evaluate, and publicly report on a **just transition plan for the coal phase-out**, championed by a lead minister to oversee and report on progress.

2. Include **provisions for just transition** in federal environmental and labour legislation and regulations, as well as relevant intergovernmental agreements.

3. Establish a targeted, long-term **research fund** for studying the impact of the coal phase-out and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

4. Fund the establishment and operation of locally-driven **transition centres** in affected coal communities.

Source: Environment and Climate Change Canada
Recommendations for Workers

5. Create a **pension bridging program** for workers who will retire earlier than planned due to the coal phase out.

6. Create a detailed and publicly available **inventory with labour market information** pertaining to coal workers, such as skills profiles, demographics, locations, and current and potential employers.

7. Create a **comprehensive funding program for workers** staying in the labour market to address their needs across the stages of securing a new job, including income support, education and skills building, re-employment, and mobility.
Recommendations for Communities

8. Identify, prioritize, and fund local infrastructure projects in affected communities

9. Establish a dedicated, comprehensive, inclusive, and flexible just transition funding program for affected communities

10. Meet directly with affected communities to learn about their local priorities, and to connect them with federal programs that could support their goals
Other Key Messages

• “Taking actions to ensure a fair and just transition for Canadian coal workers and communities is critical to creating hope, sustaining the middle class, ensuring good jobs into the future, taking action on climate change, and building public support for these and future actions.”

• “Just transition will be critical to building a broad consensus for taking action on climate change and reassuring Canadians that they will not be left behind.”

Seven Principles for a Just Transition:
1. respect for workers, unions, communities, and families
2. worker participation at every stage of transition
3. transitioning to good jobs
4. sustainable and healthy communities
5. planning for the future, grounded in today’s reality
6. nationally coherent, regionally driven, locally delivered actions
7. immediate yet durable support
D. Recommendations for Future Consultation on Broader Transition

- Future consultation could take several forms
  - on a policy-by-policy basis—following our Task Force’s approach
  - on a sector-by-sector basis

- Establishing an independent task force of experts is a proven model
  - fair and sincere brokers, who would report back to government openly and honestly

- Independent Task Forces cannot replace engagement with Government—that remains necessary

- Should involve Indigenous peoples, consistent with Canada’s commitment to renewing nation-to-nation relationships

- Must follow the Task Force’s Seven Principles for a Just Transition
Part 3: Canada’s Response

- Canada’s Budget 2018 announced the Canadian Coal Transition Initiative: $35 million to assist coal affected communities and workers.
  - To date, 26 projects have been announced, totaling over $17 million
  - A high degree of flexibility in type of projects being funded to meet individual community needs

- Canada’s Budget 2019 announced a dedicated $150 million infrastructure fund, starting in 2020–21, to support priority projects and economic diversification in coal impacted communities.

- The Minister of Natural Resources was mandated to advance legislation to support the future and livelihood of workers and their communities in the transition to a low-carbon global economy
  - COVID-19 has halted consultations for safety reasons. New strategies for advancing just transition are currently being developed.
Examples: Announced Projects to Assist Coal-Affected Communities & Workers

- Establishing a business hub and concierge center in Hanna, Alberta

- Implementing a solar installation training program at Southeast Regional College in Estevan, Saskatchewan

- Implementing projects in Atlantic Canada focused on assisting the affected communities’ economies, including for renewable energy and market diversification.
For more information, please visit the Task Force’s webpage