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September 03, 2024

Open Letter to Mayor Jyoti Gondek

Cc: City Councillors

Honorable Mike Ellis, Deputy Premier and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services

Honorable Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Mayor Gondek,

RE: Public Safety Concerns – Your “Future Economy” video claims, decrepit infrastructure, diversion of focus from municipal needs to climate ideology, mass timber construction risks (Vancouver fire of Aug. 06, 2024), and single staircase buildings

We understand from [news reports](#) that you have been elected Vice President of World Energy Cities Partnership. This seems contrary to your declared Climate Emergency. Likewise, media reports where [headlines claim](#) that you want Calgary to be at the forefront of the world energy transition defy the facts.

As former federal public servant (27 years) and diplomat (10 years), Robert Lyman, retired energy economist, has pointed out: *“One of the central premises of climate campaigners is that the whole world is now engaged in a rapid, unstoppable “energy transition” from hydrocarbons to electricity powered by renewable energy. This “storyline” is endlessly repeated and broadly accepted by the mainstream media in the OECD countries, and consequently accepted as beyond question by most members of the public. It provides much of the rationale for claims that countries like Canada should incur billions of dollars in costs to reduce GHG emissions.*

The facts do not support the claim.”

In your recent “[Future Economy.ca](#)” video as reported in the [Western Standard](#), you make simplistic and unsupportable claims about the alleged energy transition and job creation. The simple math of ‘investing more in clean tech = more jobs’ has not proven out. In 2017, a *Smart Prosperity report stated that McKinsey foresees ‘clean innovation’ in Canada’s energy sector as leading to the development of some 60,000 new jobs every year from now to 2020.* As we pointed out in our report at the time, [“Grounded in Reality,”](#) this was an astonishing forecast that did not appear to be tied to a specific industry or product, particularly considering the rocky state of economies and geopolitics world-wide. The Parliamentary Budget Officer subsequently reported that not even 10,000 jobs had been created.

In Robert Lyman's presentation of last fall, "[When Will Climate Policy Hit the Wall](#)," he showed that there has been no national increase in 'green jobs' despite enormous investment of public funds in the order of \$100s of billions of dollars.

The 1,944 scientists and scholars of CLINTEL – the international climate intelligence network, show that there is no climate emergency in their [World Climate Declaration](#). Thus it is curious that the City of Calgary made such a declaration, based on a [website out of Australia](#), (referenced in your climate emergency plan) without due diligence. **Cities have no mandate to address climate change under the Municipal Government Act.**

Long-time climate policy analyst Roger Pielke, Jr. recently posted an analysis titled "[We'll always have Paris](#)," showing that **there has been no decarbonization since the 2015 Paris Agreement**: [See Appendix for illustrative chart]

- *There has been essentially no change in global decarbonization from the 8 years pre-Paris to the 8 years post-Paris;*
- *The world, at about a 2% rate of decarbonization, sits far off from the 8.1% implied by the Paris Agreement objectives, with almost a quarter of the time now from 2015 to 2050 now in the rearview mirror (8 of 35 years);*
- *No individual country among the top 20 emitters is anywhere close to the 8.1% annual rate of decarbonization implied by the Paris Agreement. Note that the 8.1% grows larger every year that the world does not meet the required decarbonization rate.*

Since everything is made from oil, natural gas, and coal, or with the energy derived therefrom, the energy industry has significantly profited from the development of 'clean tech' **but no decarbonization is going on, despite such claims from climate activists.**

Robert Lyman summarizes the recent [Statistical Review of World Energy report](#) which shows **there is no world energy transition taking place**. Thus, you are misleading taxpaying citizens and diverting attention and funds from pressing concerns at home in Calgary.

1. Decrepit Infrastructure

Past administrations spent countless hours of human resources and invested in harebrained climate schemes, claiming in 2010, that Calgary, by 2020 would offer a prosperous economy for everyone. Clearly the municipal priorities related to mandated municipal duties such as infrastructure maintenance were not given priority, as evidenced by the recent catastrophic breaks in the main water feeder.

This should be your priority – ensuring a safe and substantial water supply for our city of over 1.6 million people and growing. In fact, the population of Calgary has risen by approx. 500,000 since 2013, approximately a 45% increase (Pop 2013, 1,149,000 to 2024 1,665,000).

2. Infrastructure Deficits will Mean Collapse with Densification

Your administration signed on to the federal government's [Housing Accelerator Fund](#) on March 17, 2023. The intention of the federal government plan is to densify neighbourhoods. Despite broad objections by Calgary residents/taxpayers, your administration is proceeding. The [paltry](#)

[sum of money offered](#) (\$228.5 million over the next 2 yrs) will not be enough to upgrade necessary infrastructure, particularly in older communities; these costs will fall on taxpayers. Without additional upgrades, existing infrastructure will suffer predictable failures – flooding, sewage main breaks, winter water main breaks. Likewise, the densification will pave over more of the surfaces of Calgary which will increase heavy rain run-off and localized flooding. Robert Muir, P. Eng., has several slide shows related to these kinds of flooding/densification/population growth issues, based on observations in Ontario cities. It does not appear that you have taken such risks and costs into consideration before embarking on the helter-skelter housing plan.

3. Mass Timber Construction Risks are High – Especially in Calgary

The Alberta government approved [mass timber construction of 12-storey](#) buildings on Feb. 8, 2020. There is additional documentation in [this variance](#).

Recently, the city of Vancouver also approved 18 storey mass timber construction, and in that council meeting, one party suggested such constructions had better fire resistance than conventional buildings. This was disproven in a shocking way on Aug. 06, 2024 when a [six-storey mass timber building catastrophically went up in flames](#). Vancouver was just lucky that ample firefighting and pumper units were nearby and available, and that there was no wind.



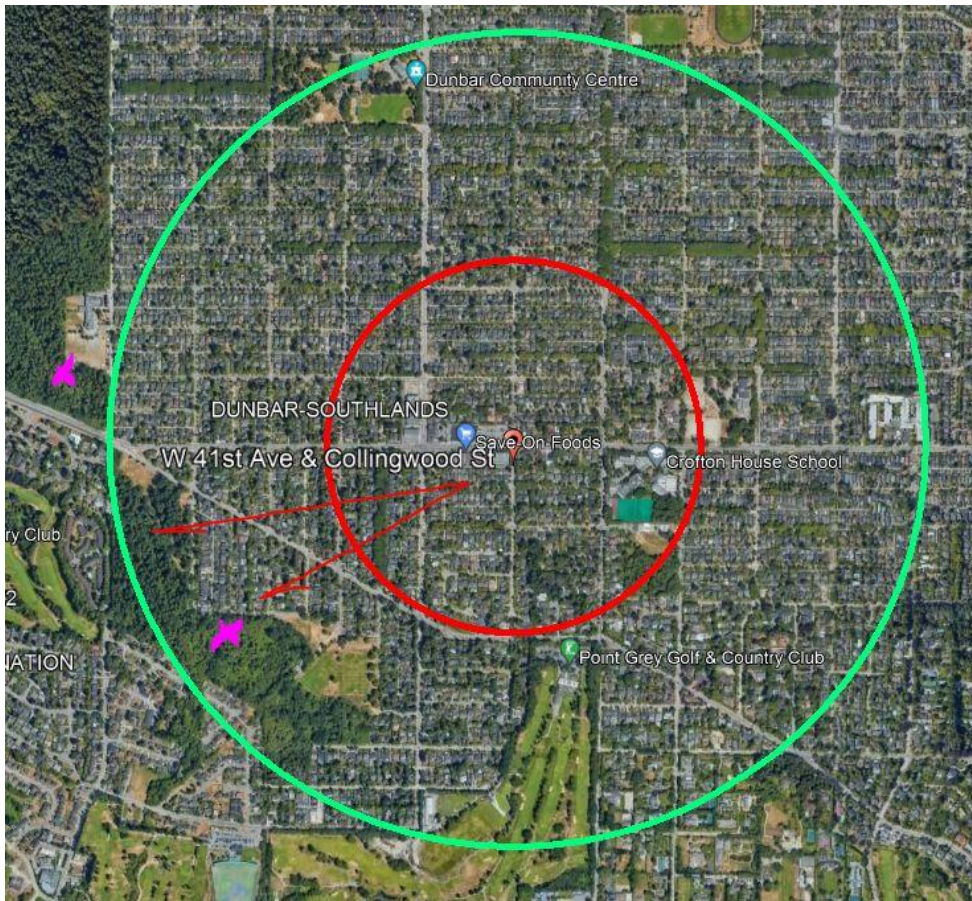
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It was widely reported that embers were being lofted into the neighbourhood and as far as Pacific Spirit Park. This map shows a 0.5km and 1 km radius circles around the fire and arrows indicate prevailing winds.

As it was, fiery embers from the Dunbar fire were being [lofted some 1.5 km away](#), tossed by the convective heat of the flames alone.

Imagine this scenario in Calgary if there was a mass timber building fire when a Chinook wind blows in!

Calgary is already a desertified region, on the edge of the Palliser Triangle and at high elevation. With the current water restrictions – which may continue/re-occur in the future due to other decrepit infrastructure issues or a cyclical period of drought – could Calgary Fire Services reasonably address such a conflagration? Note also that due to water restrictions, Calgary’s ‘urban forest’ of intentionally planted trees and many grassy lawns are no longer green – **they are an urban wildfire hazard.**

A further dangerous development is the change in bylaws, as Vancouver recently made, to allow single stairwell exits on buildings over 6 storeys.

4. Common Element – Climate Ideology Leads to Bad Public Policy

We note that Calgary has a plan to continue to reduce water use in the city:

Calgary's [30-in-30 Water Efficiency Plan](#) developed in 2005 and [updated in 2016](#), has been a major success and demonstrated our commitment to sustainable water management. Our goal was to hold the amount of water we take from our rivers steady at the amount we were using in 2003 – 212.5 billion litres - despite our growing population. **We committed to reducing our water consumption by 30% over 30 years.**

Calgary made a **climate** policy of planting trees and intends to expand its urban forest canopy significantly – yet it is unclear that sufficient water can be provided for the urban forest on citizen's properties, even if the city excuses its own watering of city-planted trees and gardens by using non-potable water (which not all residents have access to in quantity). The municipal tree planting program [costs Calgarians a fortune](#) and requires significant on-going maintenance which includes watering – how can you plan to plant more trees and shrubs while continuing to reduce water consumption? If watered by city crews with non-potable water that citizen/taxpayers do not have access to, this becomes a source of resentment. If unwatered, this becomes a public safety hazard.

The unwatered citizen plants, lawns and trees become a wildfire hazard in the situation we are presently in; a potential source of ignition in the event of a house fire – especially a mass timber construction fire which, based on the Vancouver event, appears to be very difficult to contain.

Calgary accepted the Housing Accelerator Fund money without doing any due diligence on the related impacts of densification upon existing infrastructure or that fact that the [federal government's housing plan](#) promotes mass timber construction as smarter and faster; in the original [Blueprint for More and Better Housing](#), upon which much of the government plan is built, supported by former Bank of Canada/Bank of England governor and UN Climate Envoy, Mark Carney of Brookfield, mass timber was touted as being more **climate friendly**.

Changing the Way Industry Builds Homes

As we face tight labour markets and increasing costs of construction, we must innovate. We have to build homes **smarter, faster, and at prices Canadians can afford**. We need to invest in ideas and technologies like prefabricated housing factories, **mass timber production, panelization, 3D printing, and pre-approved home design catalogues**.

We have recently seen in Vancouver that mass timber construction is a higher fire risk which can spread burning embers kilometers away; it is unclear if Calgary Fire Services would have the means, or the water, to put out such a fire; certainly, with Calgary's unpredictable Chinook winds, a regional calamity might result. Thus, we suggest a moratorium on mass timber construction in Calgary be imposed, certainly until such time as water resources are back to capacity, but probably over a longer period of time to allow for a full evaluation by fire officials in Vancouver, to determine the cause and regional impact of the Dunbar six-storey condo mass timber fire.

5. **Net Zero is Unattainable and the Results of Achieving Canada-wide Targets would be immeasurable.**

Dr. Ross McKittrick just completed a [report for the Fraser Institute](#) wherein he shows that Canada's Emissions Reduction Plan will fail to meet the intended reductions, and even if met, would only result in 0.007 °C reduction in global warming by 2100 – **that is seven thousandths of a degree Celsius.** (That assumes these emission cuts were not offset elsewhere).

For people who may not be familiar with the technical terms used by economists like Dr. McKittrick, Robert Lyman has prepared this plain language version, titled: [“At Last! The Costs and Benefits of Canada's Climate Plan.”](#)

[“Getting to Net Zero”](#) will lead to nothing but economic decline, burdensome debt for our children, energy poverty and deprivation, for no beneficial outcome.

We invite people to review the historical development of the obsessive climate focus at the City of Calgary by reviewing our past reports and submissions to city hall. Climate ideology is creating bad public policy and putting the safety of Calgary citizens at risk.

Mayor Gondek and Council, please cancel the Climate Emergency plan and get back to providing reliable municipal services.

Sincerely,

Ron Davison, P. Eng.
President
Friends of Science Society

Previous Reports:

Renewable is NOT So Doable Nov. 2013

<https://friendsofscience.org/library/policies-economics-and-ethics/renewable-is-not-so-doable.pdf>

City of Calgary – The Climate Cost-Benefit Question

<https://blog.friendsofscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/City-of-Calgary-Climate-Policy-Cost-Benefit-Overview-Sept-8-2017-FINAL-A.pdf>

City of Calgary Climate Plan – The Costs of Doing Something Wrong

<https://blog.friendsofscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Calgary-Climate-Change-Plan-3-REV-FINAL-sept-13-2017.pdf>


Calgary's Climate Emergency Declaration – Virtue Signaling While Energy Crisis Brews

<https://blog.friendsofscience.org/2021/11/17/calgarys-climate-emergency-declaration-virtue-signaling-as-energy-crisis-brews/>

An Open Letter to Mayor Jyoti Gondek and Calgary City Council; Child Indoctrination & Errors in Climate Risk Assessment

<https://blog.friendsofscience.org/2024/01/18/an-open-letter-to-mayor-jyoti-gondek-and-calgary-city-council-child-indoctrination-errors-in-climate-risk-assessment/>

Appendix

	Annual rate needed for an 80% reduction in CO2 emissions from 2023 by 2050 = 8.1%		Pre- to Post-Paris Change in Annual Decarbonization Rate	Proportion of 2023 Global CO2 Emissions from Energy
	Pre-Paris 2006-2014	Post-Paris 2015-2023		
United Kingdom	4.32%	4.77%	0.45%	0.9%
Germany	3.15%	4.34%	1.19%	1.6%
Poland	5.00%	4.33%	-0.67%	0.8%
United States	3.36%	3.39%	0.03%	13.2%
South Korea	1.79%	3.34%	1.55%	1.6%
Australia	2.99%	3.31%	0.32%	1.1%
China	4.94%	2.94%	-2.00%	31.9%
Japan	0.76%	2.80%	2.04%	2.9%
Canada	2.13%	2.57%	0.44%	1.5%
Italy	4.12%	2.25%	-1.87%	0.9%
Turkey	1.09%	2.24%	1.15%	1.2%
Brazil	-0.76%	2.15%	2.91%	1.3%
World	1.98%	1.99%	0.01%	100%
India	0.57%	1.65%	1.08%	8.0%
Saudi Arabia	-1.19%	1.46%	2.65%	1.8%
South Africa	2.90%	1.42%	-1.48%	1.2%
UAE	-1.66%	1.32%	2.98%	0.8%
Mexico	0.36%	0.88%	0.52%	1.4%
Russia	3.70%	0.64%	-3.06%	4.6%
Iran	-1.34%	0.04%	1.38%	1.9%
Indonesia	2.81%	-1.22%	-4.03%	2.0%

The table below presents the same data ranked by the annual rate of change in decarbonization rates from pre- to post-Paris.

THB	Pre-Paris 2006-2014	Post-Paris 2015-2023	Pre- to Post-Paris Change in Annual Decarbonization Rate	Proportion of 2023 Global CO2 Emissions from Energy
UAE	-1.66%	1.32%	2.98%	0.8%
Brazil	-0.76%	2.15%	2.91%	1.3%
Saudi Arabia	-1.19%	1.46%	2.65%	1.8%
Japan	0.76%	2.80%	2.04%	2.9%
South Korea	1.79%	3.34%	1.55%	1.6%
Iran	-1.34%	0.04%	1.38%	1.9%
Germany	3.15%	4.34%	1.19%	1.6%
Turkey	1.09%	2.24%	1.15%	1.2%
India	0.57%	1.65%	1.08%	8.0%
Mexico	0.36%	0.88%	0.52%	1.4%
United Kingdom	4.32%	4.77%	0.45%	0.9%
Canada	2.13%	2.57%	0.44%	1.5%
Australia	2.99%	3.31%	0.32%	1.1%
United States	3.36%	3.39%	0.03%	13.2%
World	1.98%	1.99%	0.01%	100%
Poland	5.00%	4.33%	-0.67%	0.8%
South Africa	2.90%	1.42%	-1.48%	1.2%
Italy	4.12%	2.25%	-1.87%	0.9%
China	4.94%	2.94%	-2.00%	31.9%
Russia	3.70%	0.64%	-3.06%	4.6%
Indonesia	2.81%	-1.22%	-4.03%	2.0%

https://open.substack.com/pub/rogerpielkejr/p/well-always-have-paris?r=f96qu&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web