



Conservative Party plan for Greenhouse Gases in Canada

Posted by [Stoneleigh](#) on May 2, 2007 - 8:45pm in [The Oil Drum: Canada](#)

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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This is a guest post by [chrisale](#).

A major policy speech introducing the new plan by the Conservative Party of Canada to reduce Canadian GHG emissions has been leaked to the Opposition Liberals... and in an attempt to avoid influencing the markets before they open today (Wednesday), the crux of the plan has been released.

The CBC [reports](#):

The speech says that by 2020, the government hopes it will have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 150 million tonnes.

It also says the government will explore emission credit trading with the U.S. and Mexico, something they have been reluctant to embrace in the past.

"The Tory government intends to stop the rise of greenhouse gases in three to five years".

So... this begs numbers.

Here's the Quick Facts thanks to Environment Canada's [Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#) and some quick math:

The Kyoto Target: ie. 1990 CO₂ levels for Canada: 599 Megatonnes (MT)

2004 CO₂ emissions: 754MT

Estimated 2007 emissions given 2% growth rate: **790MTB**

Estimated 2012 emission given 1% average growth (the slowdown period): 820MT

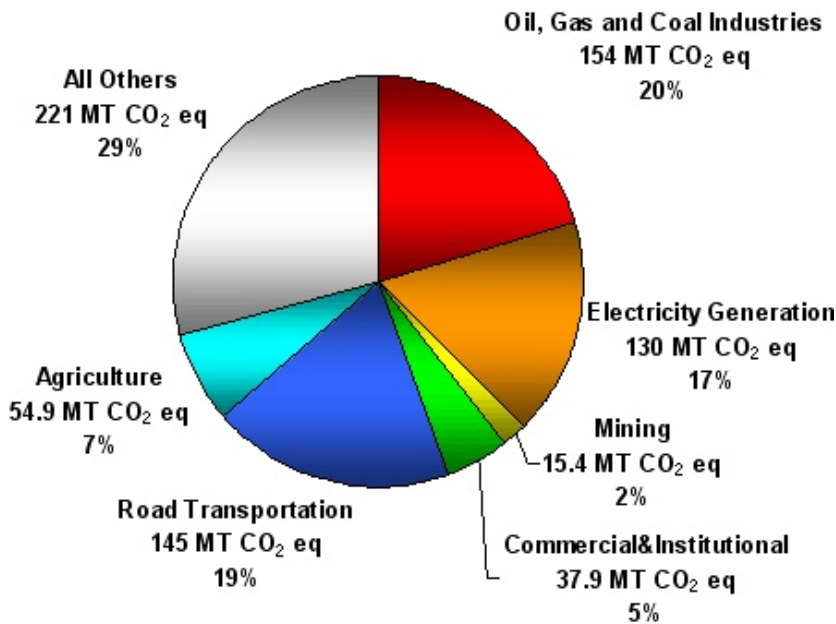
Emissions with Conservatives reduction plan by 2020: 670MT (equal to 1998 levels)

See the bottom for the explanation of the numbers.

So, eight years after other countries have met their Kyoto commitment, Canada would be bringing up the rear - still 12% off. I'm inclined to be very unimpressed by this goal. Especially since if it's so 'tough' to even do this, we have to start soon, and yet, we still haven't heard how the

Conservatives propose to do it. Given what is happening in the Oil Sands, it is going to be very difficult to cool off the incredible growth in that region. So if we can get down to 670 MT by 2020, I'd say that's alright. Nothing to be proud of, but alright.

The GHG Inventory above gives a great pie chart of CO₂ emissions by industry.



Total Emissions for Canada in 2004 were 758 Mt.



Oil & Gas, Transportation, and Electricity Generation (Coal/Gas) are the major emitters at about 20% each. With domestic Natural Gas supplies likely in major decline by 2012 (coincidence? - I think not), I see nuclear power in Alberta's - and Canada's - future to replace all the gas-fired plants.

They say the Conservatives will use carbon trading to meet their goals as well. This makes me very very sceptical. I see this as the gift to the oil and gas industry, which means we could see no reduction at all in the worst emitters, and general polluters, in the country.

What's missing in this is transportation. I'm hoping the Conservatives will surprise me and introduce major incentives for consumers and industry to reduce transportation emissions. That could only take the form of high-mileage cars, more rail, and more mass transit. These would be the only changes that would create the real societal changes that would actually reduce our 'perceived need' to endlessly emit CO₂.

If instead, the Conservatives (like their Liberal predecessors) focus solely on 'conservation', it will simply not be enough - Canadians, I think, have already gotten that message. We need more concrete, widespread action. Enough beating around the bush. Lets get to it as a nation.

EnvCan sets the baseline at 599 Megatonnes (MT) of CO₂ (ie. the 1990 'Kyoto' target). EnvCan says as of 2004 we gained 27%... to 754MT, about 2% growth a year for the past 14 years.

If we grew at 2% a year since 2004 and over the next 5 years we grow by an average of 1% a year (assuming we slow our growth gradually), that's about 12% more over the 1990 level or 820MT by 2012. So the Tories want to reduce our emissions by 150MT by 2020 (8 years further on). 150MT will bring us to around 670MT, which is about where we were at in 1998.



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