

# **A Call for Unity, Justice, and Empathy in Canada's Energy Debate**

**By a 75-Year-Old Canadian Empath  
and Retiree**

*May 19, 2025*

*"When we have an opportunity to create an atmosphere where justice, peace, love and  
harmony can prevail, we have to do something about it"*

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### Document Information

This section provides information about this document.

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**Revision Date:** May 19, 2025

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## Introduction

As a retired Canadian senior who has lived long enough to witness many chapters in our nation's story, I write this not as an expert or a politician, but as a concerned citizen, an elder, and an empath. I believe that we are at a crossroads in Canada — one where anger and division are growing louder than understanding, and where the clash between Alberta and the federal government over energy and climate change threatens our unity.

At the heart of the matter lies Alberta's vast oil sands — a vital source of employment, economic prosperity, and identity for the province. Yet these same oil sands contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, a leading cause of climate change. In response, the federal government has introduced carbon pricing and other climate measures. While these are meant to protect our planet, they have been perceived by many in Alberta as punitive and harmful to their way of life.

I believe both sides have legitimate concerns.

Alberta's workers are not villains. They are parents, neighbors, and citizens who helped build this country's wealth. They feel scapegoated for global warming and worry — rightly — about losing their livelihoods without a clear, supportive path forward. They see pipelines blocked, carbon taxed, and jobs threatened, while provinces like Quebec reject oil transport through their territory yet continue to receive equalization payments, in part funded by Alberta's energy revenues.

On the other hand, climate change is real and dangerous. Each summer, fires rage through Alberta and beyond. Droughts, floods, and rising costs are already affecting ordinary Canadians. We cannot ignore the science or delay meaningful action. But we must ensure that our climate response is fair, not fueled by blame or disregard for those most affected.

What we need now is not more division, but a **just transition** — one that provides Alberta and its workers with real opportunities in a cleaner economy. We need investment in retraining programs, support for energy innovation, and respect for Alberta's voice. At the same time, we must maintain our national climate commitments for the sake of future generations.

Politicians — whether federal or provincial — must stop fanning the flames of resentment and separation. We need national conversations rooted in respect, truth, and unity. Not every pipeline is a villain. Not every climate policy is an attack. But every Canadian deserves a say — and a future.

Canada is strongest when we recognize that no province, no region, and no citizen is disposable. Let us build a future where Alberta's energy workers are not left behind — and where our environment is not sacrificed. That is the path of justice. That is the path of unity. And that is the Canada I still believe in.

# The Carbon Tax and Alberta's Oil Sands: The Conflict

At the heart of this conflict are **two major tensions**:

1. **Climate Responsibility vs. Economic Survival**
2. **Federal Unity vs. Provincial Autonomy**

## Climate Responsibility vs. Economic Survival

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- **Oil Sands:** Alberta's oil sands contain a heavy, viscous type of oil called **bitumen**, which needs **more energy** and **water** to extract and refine than conventional crude oil.
  - This results in significantly **higher greenhouse gas emissions**.
  - These emissions contribute to **climate change**, which is linked to the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, floods, and extreme weather events across Canada.
- **Carbon Tax:** The federal carbon tax is intended to reduce emissions by putting a price on carbon. The idea is to encourage industries and individuals to shift to cleaner energy.
  - Alberta argues that this tax **hurts their economy**, which relies heavily on oil and gas, and disproportionately affects rural and working-class communities.

## Federal Unity vs. Provincial Autonomy

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- Alberta feels that **its economic interests are being sacrificed** for the rest of the country's environmental goals, especially by provinces like **Quebec**, which:
  - Oppose pipelines passing through their land,
  - Receive equalization payments funded in part by Alberta's oil revenues,
  - And yet do not contribute oil to the national energy mix.
- Some Albertans feel alienated and talk of "**Western alienation**" or even **separation** from Canada, similar to past sentiments seen in Quebec.

## Underlying Emotions

This is **not just about policy** — it's about **identity, fairness, and survival**. Many Albertans:

- Take pride in their role as economic contributors.
- Feel blamed for climate change, despite their hard work.
- Feel misunderstood by central Canadian elites.

At the same time, **many Canadians**, especially youth and urban voters:

- Are deeply concerned about the climate crisis.
- Want rapid transition to renewable energy.
- See continued oil production as irresponsible and short-sighted.

## What Would Be a Fair and Just Way Forward?

A solution must **balance economic reality, environmental responsibility, and national unity**.

Here are some **principles** for that:

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### 1. A Just Transition for Alberta

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- The federal government should invest **heavily in retraining workers**, building clean energy infrastructure, and supporting new industries in Alberta.
- This shows respect and solidarity with workers and communities who built Canada's wealth.

### 2. National Dialogue, Not Division

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- We need respectful, **inclusive public conversations**, not toxic blame or inflammatory rhetoric.
- Politicians (on all sides) must stop using this issue to score political points or stoke fear and anger.

### 3. Phased, Science-Based Energy Transition

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- A **realistic** timeline should be agreed upon for reducing oil sands production — allowing time for adjustment, while meeting climate targets.
- Incentives for reducing emissions at oil sands sites (e.g. carbon capture) could be part of this transition.

### 4. Respect for Provincial Jurisdiction

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- Alberta deserves to have its **voice heard**. But **Canada must stay united** — no province should feel the need to separate because of policy disputes.
- Cooperation agreements between provinces and the federal government can help balance interests.

### 5. Honest Climate Communication

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- The truth is: **climate change will affect all of us**, and ignoring it will cost us more in the long run.
- But we must also be honest about how hard the transition will be — and support those most affected.

## Things to do after reading this document

After reading this document in its entirety, you are requested to send an email to: [Info@Right2Write.ca](mailto:Info@Right2Write.ca) with responses to the following questions if you want to receive further communications on this topic:

<b>1. Which part of this document you felt you could relate to?</b>	
<b>2. Which sections of the document did not meet with your satisfaction?</b>	
<b>3. Which part of the document you felt you could participate in and make a difference?</b>	
<b>4. Do you feel this document resonates with the need for more to be done for Unity, Justice, and Empathy in Canada's Energy Debate?</b>	
<b>5. Do you believe this document has addressed the urgent needs of Albertans? Or do you feel more needs to be done? If so, what would you suggest?</b>	
<b>6. What is your list of items you would like to see happen for Unity, Justice, and Empathy in Canada's Energy Debate?</b>	
<b>7. Are you willing to stand up and contribute with your suggestions and positive feedback?</b>	
<b>8. Your Comments please</b>	
<b>9. Your Name and Contact Information to receive updates:</b>	