

Intelligence MEMOS



From: Charles DeLand
To: Canadians Concerned About Climate Change
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Re: A REALITY CHECK FOR CANADA'S EMISSIONS REDUCTION BLUEPRINT

The federal government's 2030 Emissions Reduction [Plan](#) was the subject of a recent C.D. Howe Institute special policy seminar to address several key questions: What's realistic? How feasible are the Plan's projected 2030 outcomes, and the implications for the economy, for households and for businesses?

The cross-sector scope and economy-wide scale of the Plan makes it unprecedented in modern Canadian policy. The conference was designed to present a clear-eyed, non-partisan view of the Plan's contents rather than to develop an alternate roadmap or idealized suite of policies.

An opening panel set the framework for the conference, examining how well prior government plans have progressed relative to their aspirations, the potential barriers to achieving desired 2030 outcomes, and the stakeholders likely to be involved.

A closing panel examined opportunities for improvement, how governments can work together, and an assessment of the Plan's place in a broad public context. The full report from the day can be found [here](#).

The day's discussion took place against a backdrop of signs of economic recovery post-COVID-19, rising energy demand, lagging energy supply investment, supply chain disruptions, a recognition of the need for greater Indigenous economic participation, and an elevated emphasis on energy security prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The preparatory work for the conference, and the presentations and discussions at the event proper, yielded numerous insights, many of which resonated across sectors.

Sessions followed the structure of the Plan itself and involved participants from economic sectors with significant GHG: oil and gas production, transportation, electricity, and buildings.

Not a single speaker or participant unreservedly found the Plan's aspirations easily achievable, though there was a wide range of perspectives. There was also a contrast in views between participants who argued for first-mover advantage and those who said that faster adjustment increases costs disproportionately.

Nonetheless, a few broad themes emerged:

- The desire for a greater level of modeling detail and transparency underlying the Plan. This would help stakeholders better assess the Plan and contribute to its improvement. In many ways, it is a plan for a plan.
- Timelines are not realistic in view of the size of many of the projects and slowness of permitting. All sectors will need to gather equipment, have labour available and build infrastructure.
- The need for greater policy certainty and durability. It is important that participants largely know what to expect in the future and can rely on expectations when making decisions today. This includes the expected price and durability of emissions and tax measures, among other things. Policy durability is seen by participants as greater when enhanced by non-partisan institutions and processes.
- Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation among public and private sectors is desired – there are doubts that we can have this with increasing numbers of policies and agencies. Overlapping government jurisdictions and policies can blunt intended outcomes in several contexts.

Tomorrow we present a summary of the sectoral discussions.

Charles DeLand is the Calgary-based associate director, research at the C.D. Howe Institute and conference moderator. To send a comment or leave feedback, email us at blog@cdhowe.org.

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