

C U S J

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

A national faith-based organization founded in support of Unitarian values

President, Katharine Im-Jenkins

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The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister of Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister Prentice:

I am writing to express the concern of Unitarians across Canada about climate change and to urge that, at the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, your government support decisive measures to halt further increases in greenhouse gas emissions and to reduce them to a safe level.

It is now clear that climate change is real. Furthermore, its impact is stronger and faster than was predicted even a short time ago. Arctic ice is melting much faster than expected, so are the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. In Canada, we see impacts of changing climate in the melting of permafrost in the North and weather-related events such as floods and droughts in the South. Secondary effects are also evident, such as the pine beetle infestations. The changes are taking place at an increasing speed and repeatedly we find that predictions have been too optimistic.

We know that the world is an interconnected web of life, and that the actions of each of us affects everyone else. **Canada's choices matter.** It is time to let go of our own immediate, short-term profit, and put the larger good at the centre of Canadian policy.

Human activities are the primary reason for these changes. Our reliance on fossil fuels results in the steady increase of carbon dioxide concentration in the air. The safe concentration level of 350 parts per million has already been exceeded, and the trend continues. Canada's own emissions continued to increase, in spite of the commitment we made under the Kyoto Protocol. Without decisive action, climate change may get out of control, wreaking unpredictable havoc on our environment and the lives of present and future Canadians.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen offers one more chance to halt this dangerous trend. Canada must do its part. We must contribute positively to these negotiations and assist in the achievement of a strong agreement. We must encourage agreement by developed nations, including ourselves, to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to assist developing nations to achieve legitimate development goals while limiting the increase in their emissions.

We count on you and the Canadian delegation to the UN Conference to promote immediate, measurable and effective steps towards eliminating the danger of runaway climate change. We support the adoption of a global treaty grounded in the latest science and built around the principles of equity and justice.

Sincerely,

Katharine Im-Jenkins
President, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

cc Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
cc Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Official Opposition
cc Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democrat Party
cc Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
cc Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada