



April 7, 2025

Hon. Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan
Premier's Office, Room 226
Saskatchewan Legislature
2405 Legislature Drive
Regina, S4S 0B3
premier@gov.sk.ca

Dear Premier Scott Moe,

RCE Saskatchewan wishes to express its grave concern about Saskatchewan's weak record of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This has been further eroded by recent announcements that Saskatchewan is considering extending the operation of coal-fired electricity beyond 2030, that building efficiency standards for residential constructions are reverting to Tier 1, and that the industrial carbon tax is to be eliminated in our province. All three of these decisions further undercut made-in-Saskatchewan solutions to the climate crisis and opportunities for education for more sustainable livelihoods and lifestyles.

This ongoing erosion of our ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is of concern for three reasons:

1. The province is failing to contribute meaningfully to international commitments to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 13) related to climate change built on scientific evidence and our ethical responsibilities to current and future generations;
2. The province is failing to recognize and acknowledge the economic costs of climate change; and
3. The province is undercutting its ability to be internationally competitive, which is of particular concern considering current America's threats to international trade.

By way of background, RCE Saskatchewan is a Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) acknowledged by the UN University in 2007.ⁱ The 190+ RCEs around the world work to advance the UNESCO Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP).ⁱⁱ We see education for sustainable development as essential in achieving the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are intended to guide the global development agenda through to 2030.ⁱⁱⁱ Our RCE brings together scholars and community practitioners dedicated to researching and advancing ESD. As part of our mandate, we share information and education about our local responsibilities in relation to Canada's global sustainable development commitments.

Regarding Saskatchewan's failure to adequately support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SDG of relevance to this letter is Goal 13 on Climate Action. SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. As you are likely aware, the Government of Canada as part of the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 2015, adopted resolution 70/1 "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"^{iv}. As part of this resolution 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted to guide global development from 2015 to 2030 along with targets for each goal (p. 14-27). It is our view that those elements of the commitments that fall within Provincial Government jurisdiction are commitments that the Government of Saskatchewan would share.

Vis-à-vis economic impacts, it is our view that the province is ignoring the importance of addressing climate change, while also failing to acknowledge that climate change is already having significant financial impacts, which will continue to grow. Recent examples include the 2015 Wildfires that cost the province \$100 million just to fight the fires and does not include losses incurred.^v Similarly the 2014 Assiniboine River Basin Flood created \$1.5 billion in damages and \$1 billion in agricultural losses.^{vi} More recently, your 2024-25 Mid-Year Report states “Although weather conditions were good early in the season, very dry conditions in many regions of the province during the summer significantly impacted crop yields and quality, particularly with canola. These fluctuations led to higher crop insurance claims, increasing the Agriculture Expense Theme by \$385 million, or 25.1 per cent, from the 2024-25 budget.”^{vii} This follows the trend that has seen over \$6 billion in insurance claims and benefits paid out to producers to compensate for “significant challenges in weather conditions” from 2020 to 2023.^{viii} Expenses related to wildfire were similarly higher than expected in 2024. The impact of these high expenditures on the province’s financial position has been publicly acknowledged.

Regarding export competitiveness, continued inaction on greenhouse gas emissions leaves Saskatchewan exporters exposed to border carbon adjustments by other countries. In the face of current trade issues with the United States, trade with the European Union will become more important. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism ((CBAM)^x being brought forward by the European Union will put a price on carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods entering the EU. The intention is to ensure that the EU’s climate objectives are not undermined by ensuring that the carbon price of imports is equivalent to the carbon price of domestic production. Given the carbon intensity of Saskatchewan’s electricity, the CBAM will put Saskatchewan exporters – whether of food, fertilizers or minerals – at an economic disadvantage. This will also discourage investments in Saskatchewan by large corporations who have made commitments to reduce their carbon emissions.

Given these threats to our environment, our economy and our international competitiveness Saskatchewan needs to be pro-active in a wide variety of sectors. With Saskatchewan’s current electrical production relying considerably on the burning of fossil fuels Saskatchewan has a particular challenge. Our energy emission factor of 680 grams CO₂/kWh compared to the national average of 100 g/kWh^x means that our approach needs to be quite different from that of other provinces. Saskatchewan must devise pathways for its businesses and citizens to economize and reduce their electricity use. SaskPower’s Energy Assistance Program is an innovative example which provides low-income households with free LED lights, low flow shower heads, and a smart thermostat.^{xi} However, this is only one program and in the absence of general carbon pricing, business and citizens need to be provided with the education and programmatic options to reduce their GHG emissions through innovative business models and livelihood choices. Identifying and promoting these best practices can be done with a range of partners, including the post-secondary sector, businesses, municipalities, non-profits, and local sustainability practitioners, among others.

The preservation of wetlands in Saskatchewan also offers an opportunity to offset the emission of considerable amounts of greenhouse gases. According to Dr. Kerri Finlay’s analysis, GHG emissions from “organic matter decomposition after [wetland] drainage is much greater than any benefit from increasing eco-efficiency on-farm” (e.g., cutting down equipment operation time and resulting fuel use) and that “wetland drainage can add approximately 5 to 8 % to Prairie province’s agricultural GHG emissions every year”.^{xii} An awareness and incorporation of these adverse climate impacts from drainage should be a central part of key policies such as the Agricultural Water Stewardship Policy.

In view of the overwhelming environmental, social and economic risks of climate change, especially for an economy like Saskatchewan’s which is built on agriculture, combined with growing impacts of our current trade challenges, RCE Saskatchewan urges the Government of Saskatchewan to seriously reconsider its current policies in relation to greenhouse gas emissions. More generally, if industries and businesses are no longer paying the carbon costs of their activities through carbon pricing, the province has an even greater responsibility to regulate these sectors to prohibit or extensively regulate activities that greatly increase GHG emissions including charging appropriate sector wide taxes, fines, and/or other penalties.

We will be sharing this letter and any updates with our RCE membership in Saskatchewan and our global RCE colleagues, along with relevant non-governmental, municipal, provincial and federal authorities for their information.

If there are ways our network can be of assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,

	
Dr. Roger Petry, Co-coordinator RCE Saskatchewan (www.saskrce.ca) roger.petry@uregina.ca 306-585-5295	Margret Asmuss, Co-coordinator RCE Saskatchewan (www.saskrce.ca) msasmuss@sasktel.net 306-280-4871

- c.c: Hon. Travis Keisig, Minister of Environment, env.minister@gov.sk.ca
Hon. Colleen Young, Minister of Energy, ministerER@gov.sk.ca
Hon. Warren Kaeding, Minister of Trade and Export Development, Minister.TED@gov.sk.ca
Carla Beck., Leader of the NDP, reginalakeview@ndpcaucus.sk.ca
Jared Clarke, Shadow Minister for Environment and Municipal Affairs, reginawalshacres@ndpcaucus.sk.ca
Alena Young, Shadow Minister of Economy and Jobs, and SaskPower, reginasouthalbert@ndpcaucus.sk.ca
Tara Clementt, Provincial Auditor, info@auditor.sk.ca
Terry Duguid, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, terry.duguid@parl.gc.ca
Canada Water Agency, water-eau@cwa-aec.gc.ca
RCE Saskatchewan Partners and Members

ⁱ <https://oldrce.ualr.in/rce-vision-and-mission>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/248081e.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

^{iv} https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf

^v <https://torontosun.com/2015/07/24/cost-of-saskatchewan-wildfires-to-top-100-million-wall>

^{vi} http://www.merritnet.org/Papers/Pomeroy_Dumanski_2017.pdf

^{vii} https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2024/november/28/government-of-saskatchewan-releases-2024-25-mid-year-report?utm_source=chatgpt.com

^{viii} <https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/estimated-1-8b-in-insurance-claims-to-be-paid-to-producers-for-2023-growing-season>

^{ix} https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en

^x <https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-commodities/electricity/report/canadas-renewable-power/provinces/renewable-power-canada-saskatchewan.html>

^{xi} <https://www.saskpower.com/power-savings-and-programs/home/programs/energy-assistance-program>

^{xii} Dr. Kerri Finlay "Effects of Drainage on Carbon Emissions from Wetlands in the Canadian Prairie Pothole Region." Presentation at the University of Regina, March 6, 2025.