



The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
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September 3, 2025

Re: Our checklist for national interest projects

Dear Prime Minister,

As leading environmental, nature and climate organizations in Canada, we write to you respecting Bill C-5, the *Building Canada Act*. Put simply, it is in Canada's national interest to pursue projects that set the country on a path to net-zero emissions and thriving nature, not outdated and expensive fossil fuel projects that push us towards more climatic and environmental breakdown – and more economic instability and hardship.

As we near the end of yet another summer of heatwaves, drought and wildfires that have ravaged our forests and led to the evacuations of thousands of people, we urgently need to build projects that will help decarbonize our economy. At the same time, designating and prioritizing projects in the national interest should not put our communities or nature at risk.

Designated projects will have long-term impacts that outlast the current economic threats. Moreover, Canada's economic challenges are exacerbated by the climate and biodiversity crises. Wildfires threaten our economic security, affect human health, destroy homes and

communities, threaten lives¹ and cost billions in damages each year.² Research shows that while climate change is having a drag on economic productivity and will make life less affordable, investments in climate resilience can yield significant economic benefits,³ and investing in nature-based climate solutions and nature restoration can generate significant returns.⁴

Projects like high-speed rail, remote transit services, renewable energy and inter-provincial transmission, and clean drinking water and telecommunications services in Indigenous communities are nation building, not pipelines that put our coasts at risk and pit communities and provinces against each other.

To ensure that national interest projects deliver long-term benefits to Canada, we believe that projects can only be in the national interest if they uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples, protect the environment, foster sustainability, and help achieve a stable climate, thriving nature, intergenerational and intra-generational equity, and environmental justice.

To be considered to be in the national interest, projects should:

- (a)** Strengthen Canada's autonomy, resilience, security and identity;
- (b)** Have a high likelihood of successful execution and represent an economically viable undertaking;
- (c)** Advance reconciliation and uphold the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the standard of free, prior, and informed consent;
- (d)** Have undergone early planning in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and with expert and public participation, and adhere to any guidelines produced by the minister or the major federal projects office;
- (e)** Foster sustainability;
- (f)** Help, and not hinder the Government of Canada's ability to meet its environmental and human rights obligations or its commitments in respect of climate change; and
- (g)** Not produce fossil fuels or transport fossil fuels for export.

¹ Canadian Climate Institute, "Fact Sheet: Climate change and wildfires":

<https://climateinstitute.ca/news/fact-sheet-wildfires/>.

² Insurance Bureau of Canada, "2024 shatters record for costliest year for severe weather-related losses in Canadian history at \$8.5 billion" (13 January 2025):

<https://www.ibc.ca/news-insights/news/2024-shatters-record-for-costliest-year-for-severe-weather-related-losses-in-canadian-history-at-8-5-billion>.

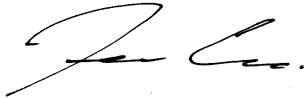
³ Canadian Climate Institute, *Damage Control: Reducing the costs of climate impacts in Canada*:

<https://climateinstitute.ca/reports/damage-control/>.

⁴ Smart Prosperity Institute and Nature United, *Unlocking the Economic Power of Natural Climate Solutions* (October 2024): <https://www.natureunited.ca/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Unlocking-Economic-Powerof-NCS.pdf>.

Only projects that check all seven boxes deserve the fast track. We urge you to commit to these basic standards as you determine which projects move forward under Bill C-5. Projects of national interest must truly reflect our core values: protecting the environment, upholding Indigenous rights, and building a sustainable future.

Sincerely,



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