

Joint Statement from Canada's National Professional Associations: Advancing Integrated Climate Action

October 29th, 2018

Preamble

The recently released IPCC SR15 report is unequivocal: we are beginning to experience the impacts of climate change, and it will take “rapid, far reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” to keep global warming below the crucial threshold of 1.5°C. As professionals, we have the opportunity and responsibility to address both climate change mitigation (emissions reduction) and adaptation (responding to the impacts we cannot avoid). Our associations have a crucial role to play in advancing ethics, awareness, practices and policies that support integrated action on climate change, due to our prominent roles in many aspects of the development and management of resources, ecosystems and communities.

As such, we acknowledge that climate change is causing a variety of unavoidable impacts, many of which are projected to increase in duration, magnitude and severity. In the years ahead, these impacts will affect the outcomes of professional decisions made today. There is widespread recognition that we must plan ways to adapt, and that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is crucial if we are to minimize the risks – both types of actions are urgently required. Typically, mitigation and adaptation have been addressed separately; however, every opportunity to mitigate or adapt must be explored. Can an adaptation solution incorporate mitigation? Can a mitigation solution incorporate adaptation? Can thinking that incorporates both action streams as one process lead to transformative approaches?

Integrating these perspectives in a “Low Carbon Resilience” lens to guide decision-making and best practices, where appropriate, can save time and resources, increase returns on investment, and generate economic, environmental, social, and health co-benefits. Ensuring the two streams of action are coordinated and cross-evaluated can also help to avoid risks and unintended consequences associated with advancing them separately.

Whereas, we:

- Recognize the ethical and practice implications of climate change for all professionals.
- Expect our members to build upon their current science-based, knowledge-driven approaches to better incorporate the best available climate science into professional decisions and actively consider integrated action on adaptation and mitigation.
- Acknowledge that it is necessary to stay up to date on current and past practices, with the aim of better informing our members on best practices in light of climate change.
- Accept that innovation to address climate change may involve some uncertainty or risk.
- Recognize our civic responsibility to provide strong leadership in our communities and spheres of influence around pressing issues such as the need for integrated climate action.

Therefore, our professional associations commit to:

- Enacting or advocating for **professional and ethical standards and codes of practice** that explicitly incorporate responsibilities for advancing integrated climate action
- Working to **advance shared understanding and ownership** among our members of our individual and professional responsibilities for integrated climate action within our spheres of influence
- Providing **leadership in the public sphere** to advance understanding and support for integrated climate action among the public, decision-makers and stakeholders
- Reviewing and **commenting on policies and legislation** to promote and enable innovative practice for integrated climate action
- **Improving access to timely education and training** for our members, in climate change science, best practices, tools, implementation and approaches to integrated climate action
- **Cooperating with all levels of government and other organizations** to advance integrated climate action, through for example: leadership; developing information, standards, guidelines and policies; implementing pilot projects; and awareness building
- Advocating for and enabling **effective monitoring and reporting processes** for accountability on integrated climate action
- Working with all levels of government, insurers and other parties to **address shared risks** arising from climate change, including identifying incentives for professionals to innovate and share the costs and benefits of adaptive management
- **Advancing interdisciplinary capacity** for integrated climate action through **collaboration** between associations, and enabling collaboration amongst our members

We call on Indigenous, local, provincial, territorial and national governments to:

- **Provide meaningful leadership** domestically and internationally, including advocating for integrated climate action and upholding commitments in the Paris Agreement.
- **Employ a mix of adaptation and mitigation options**, implemented in a participatory and integrated manner (in line with the IPCC Special Report 15, Section D3)
- **Invest in** developing and maintaining **data and research** on climate change, integrated climate action, related activities, policies and promising practices, and enable access and uptake across sectors and professions
- Create **policies and programs that enable integrated climate action**, and invest in innovation and capacity building for advancing this approach
- **Work with professional associations** in areas of overlapping interest and capacity, such as development of policies and information, and outreach to professions and sectors
- Review and recommend **updates to federal and provincial codes and standards** and requirements to enable integrated climate action by all levels of government and other actors

Signed by,

Your association's name here!