

Bill C-311, the Climate Change Accountability Act

Bill C-311, the *Climate Change Accountability Act*, passed its third reading vote in the House of Commons on May 5, 2010, and was introduced in the Senate on May 6 by Senator Grant Mitchell. All three opposition parties voted to support a virtually identical version of this bill (C-377) at third reading in the House of Commons in June 2008, but it did not receive Senate consideration before the fall 2008 federal election.

- Bill C-311 would set a national, **science-based emission reduction target** that represents Canada's fair share of the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution. This target is to reduce Canada's emissions to 80% below the 1990 level by 2050, which is identical to President Obama's 2050 target. G8 leaders as a group committed to a similar target at the 2009 G8 Summit.
- Bill C-311 would also require the Minister of the Environment to establish a **credible pathway** to achieve the 2050 goal, by setting national emission targets for five-year intervals from 2015 to 2045. Until this target plan is established, Canada's 2020 target would be to reduce national emissions to 25% below the 1990 level.
- The Minister of the Environment would be required to publish this pathway, along with the scientific, economic and technical assessments used to establish each target. The trajectory would be subject to a review at least every five years, giving Canada the **flexibility** to adjust its emissions pathway in light of new developments.
- Bill C-311 would require the government to plan emission-reduction policies well into future and lay them out clearly every year. This **longer-term approach** is critical to ensuring that Canada has federal policies that get us on track to where we need to be. It would also provide industry with the regulatory certainty it needs to plan major investments.
- Bill C-311 would create an **obligation** for the government to adopt regulations to ensure Canada meets its emissions targets, taking into account federal spending programs and provincial action. The bill would also oblige the government to ensure that its positions in international negotiations align with those targets.
- Bill C-311 would extend and strengthen important **accountability mechanisms**, by requiring regular reviews of the government's plans and their implementation by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy and the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.
- Voting Bill C-311 into law would send a powerful statement of renewed climate **leadership** to the world, demonstrating that Canada is prepared to play a responsible part in the global climate fight. This leadership is critical to engaging other major emitters and building the trust necessary to forge a strong global deal.
- **Economic analysis** by MK Jaccard and Associates, a leading modelling firm that has provided advice to the Government of Canada and to several provincial governments, shows that Canada could reach a science-based national GHG target by 2020 while growing the economy by well over 20% and adding nearly two million net new jobs. (For further details, see the summary report *Climate Leadership, Economic Prosperity* at <http://climate.pembina.org/pub/1909>).