



# **BRIEFING NOTE: Offshore Oil and Gas Goal**

**Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act  
June 2022**

## **GOAL IN EGCCRA:**

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There is currently no goal in EGCCRA addressing offshore oil and gas.

## **OUR ANALYSIS:**

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The EAC would like to see the government commit to end all subsidies, supports and development of fossil fuels in Nova Scotia's offshore and invest in policies and programs to support oil and gas workers and affected communities transition to a low-carbon economy so as to ensure no one is left behind.

## **RECOMMENDED GOAL:**

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Phase out all offshore oil and gas activity by January 1, 2025 in a way that ensures a just transition for workers and affected communities. Drilling in all protected areas is banned.

## **RATIONALE:**

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- There is currently no oil and gas production in Nova Scotia's offshore; however, regulatory and administrative staff are in place to oversee and support the industry.

## RATIONALE CONTINUED:

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- Nova Scotia has spent millions of dollars on offshore seismic studies that are part of a four-year \$11.8 million commitment to the Offshore Growth Strategy made in 2018. Additionally, Nova Scotia is listed as the “Lead Scientific Partner” of an oil and gas conference scheduled to take place in Morocco in October 2022. These are some examples of the significant indirect support for the offshore oil and gas industry taking place in Nova Scotia
- If the province expands offshore oil and gas, all associated emissions with extraction and production will be counted towards our emissions inventory while use of the fossil fuels will be attributed to the end user. In other words, Nova Scotia will not only continue to add to its emissions through production but is also contributing to continued fossil fuel use elsewhere. What the province needs to focus on as we work towards achieving net-zero by 2050 is a shift away from fossil fuels and the just transition of fossil fuel workers to green jobs.
- Just transition is a social justice framework for facilitating the shift to a zero-carbon economy. A just transition of the oil and gas sector would mean that the costs of phasing out the fossil fuels are not unfairly borne by the workers and that the benefits of a clean economy are fairly distributed. Key components of this transition include centering the voices of workers, reskilling and upskilling the workforce and shifting investments from fossil fuels toward green jobs.

## RATIONALE CONTINUED:

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- As part of a just transition Nova Scotia needs to rectify inequities we currently find in the fossil fuel industry. Firstly, people from Indigenous communities, African Nova Scotian communities, women, immigrants and other underrepresented communities need to be brought into the sector. Secondly, workplaces need to invest in culture change and structural supports to create a welcoming workplace where their colleagues from traditionally marginalized groups will want to remain.
- Nova Scotians overwhelmingly want to see a transition to a low-carbon economy. In Nova Scotia, a 2021 poll conducted by Narrative Research showed that 4 out of 5 citizens want to see a transition to renewable energy and improved energy efficiency as well as training and income support for affected oil and gas workers. The polling, commissioned by the Council of Canadians, Sierra Club Canada Foundation and Ecology Action Centre, also revealed widespread agreement that any post-pandemic recovery must prioritize support for people who have been made vulnerable by the current economy
- One way to promote inclusion is through proactive transition policies[1]. These are policies that maximize the potential benefits to workers to shifting to a clean economy. Examples of proactive transition policies include government investment in apprenticeship training and local hiring requirements. Such proactive approaches can help ensure historically marginalized groups are included in the transition by including initiatives such as recruiting specifically from their communities.

# ACHIEVING THE GOAL:

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## 1. Cease investment in oil and gas.

In a report released in May 2021, the International Energy Agency (IEA) states there is no need for investment in new fossil fuel supply on the pathway to net-zero. The IEA goes on to criticize the gap between rhetoric and action stating that it needs to close if governments around the world are to meet their net-zero targets. A complete transformation on how we produce, consume and transport energy is what they cite as needing to take place.

## 2. Introduce policies that will ensure the transition to a green economy is equitable and centres the workforce.

The following policies are based on recommendations put forward by Iron & Earth<sup>[2]</sup>, a non-for-profit led by oil sands workers with a mission to empower fossil fuel industry and Indigenous workers to build and implement climate solutions.

- A National Upskilling Initiative to rapidly train fossil fuel industry and Indigenous workers for careers in the net-zero economy
- A National Repositioning Initiative to support businesses to retool manufacturing capacities and pivot business services to meet emerging demand in net-zero industries. Pivoting programs and policies would support contractors, consultants and service providers to position themselves competitively in the zero emissions economy.
- Nature-Based Solutions Initiative to support and strengthen ecosystems, carbon sinks and green infrastructure. Oil producing countries are well suited to implement a range of nature-based solutions because fossil fuel industries have for many decades been mandated to reclaim and restore natural areas following extraction of natural resources.

## ACHIEVING THE GOAL CONTINUED:

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Additional policy approaches for the oil and gas sector should be developed with input from workers and could follow the guidance of what was recommended for coal workers by the Just Transition Task Force for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities. Find reports here: [Task Force Reports](#).

## CONTACT:

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[1] Mertins-Kirkwood, H., & Deshpande, Z. (2019). Who is Included in a Just Transition?: Considering Social Equity in Canada's Shift to Zero-carbon Economy. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

[2] Iron and Earth. (n.d.). [The Prosperous Transition Plan](#).