

Press Release Backgrounder

The recently announced Sustainable Development Goals Act includes a legislated climate target of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 53% below 2005 levels by 2030. This is currently the most ambitious GHG reduction target in Canada, but is still insufficient. Several European countries have set more ambitious targets, and the science and international agreements are clear in stating that Nova Scotia must do more.

For over two years, the Ecology Action Centre has advocated that Nova Scotia should have a legislated GHG reduction target of 50% below 1990 levels by the year 2030. This target represents the minimum emission reductions required by Canadian jurisdictions in order to do our fair share of keeping global temperature rise to below 1.5°C. This considers Nova Scotia's fair share of reductions, based on the internationally agreed upon understanding that all jurisdictions have "...common but differentiated responsibilities" based on economic ability, current emissions and historic emissions.

Comparison of Targets

2030 Targets	Reduction from 1990 Base Line	Reduction from 2005 Base Line	Million Tonnes of Provincial CO ₂ e/yr
New Provincial Target	43%	53%	11.2
EAC Target	50%	58%	9.8

According to these targets, in the year 2030, Nova Scotia will emit 11.2 Mt CO₂e. If the EAC target was adopted, the emissions in the year 2030 would be 9.8 Mt CO₂e.

Why a Difference of 1.4 Mt CO₂e Matters

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report on 1.5°C of Global Warming, "the rate at which we decrease GHG emissions will determine whether or not we overshoot 1.5C or 2C of global temperature rise" (p. 15). This means that in the context of getting to net-zero global emissions by 2050 the most rapid decreases in emissions should happen as soon as possible, rather than being delayed.

Scientific Targets vs Equitable Scientific Targets

The IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C of Global Warming states that “global net anthropogenic CO₂ emissions [must] decline by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 (40–60% interquartile range), reaching net zero around 2050 (2045–2055 interquartile range)” (pg. 12). For Nova Scotia, 45% below 2010 is equivalent to about 53% below 2005, which is the target found in the Sustainable Development Goals Act.

This target, however, ignores the fact that Canada and Nova Scotia have a greater obligation to reduce emissions than the global average. Figure 1 highlights that not all countries have the same level of emissions.

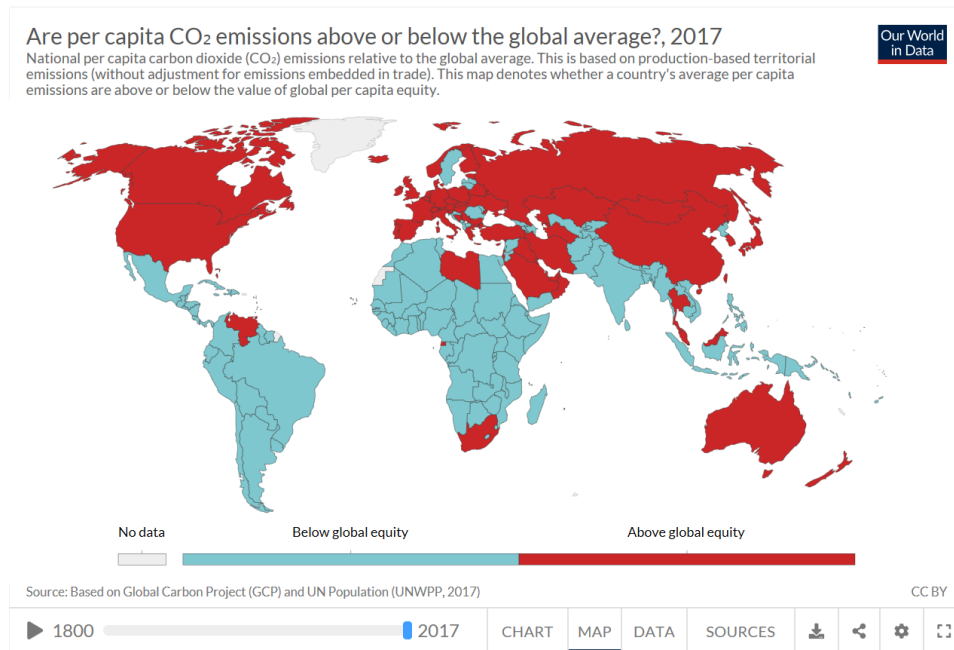


Figure 1. Emissions per Capita by Countryⁱⁱ

While all countries must reduce their emissions, both the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C of Global Warming and the Paris Agreement state that our emission reductions targets must reflect our fair share, and reflect that some jurisdictions emit more than others, and some have the monetary ability to reduce emissions faster. The consideration of jurisdictions doing their fair share comes from the concept of “common but differentiated responsibilities”, which was enshrined in the internationally agreed upon United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Changeⁱⁱⁱ, in 1992. Almost 30 years

later it remains a key piece in international climate agreements, and is included in both the Paris Agreement, and the IPCC Special Report on 1.5° C of Global Warming.

IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C of Global Warming:

“Collective efforts at all levels, in ways that reflect **different circumstances and capabilities**, in the pursuit of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, taking into account equity as well as effectiveness, can facilitate strengthening the global response to climate change, achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty (high confidence). {IPCC- 1.4.2, 2.3.1, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 4.2.2, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 4.4.5, 4.5.3, 5.3.1, 5.4.1, 5.5.3, 5.6.1, 5.6.2, 5.6.3}” (pg. 23)^{iv}

Paris Agreement:

Article 2:

“(a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change”

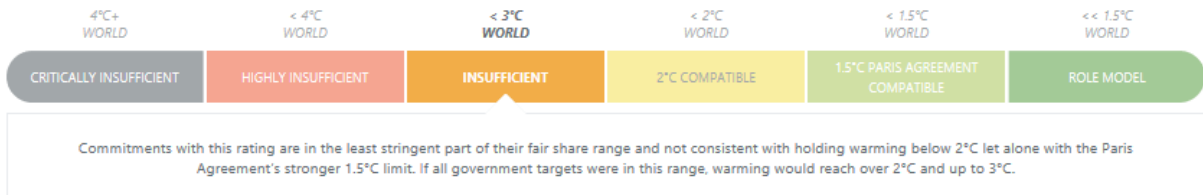
“2. This Agreement will be implemented to reflect **equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities**, in the light of different national circumstances.”^v

Nova Scotia's Fair Share

According to both the IPCC and the Paris Agreement, targets set by any jurisdiction must be based on science and must also be equitable, meaning they should represent a jurisdiction's fair share. The Climate Action Tracker is a collaboration between Climate Analytics and New Climate Institute. It conducts “independent scientific analysis that tracks government climate action and measures it against the globally agreed Paris Agreement aim of “holding warming well below 2°C, and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.”^{vi}

According to this independent analysis, global warming could reach over 3°C and up to 4°C if all countries in the world emitted the same amount as Canada^{vii}. Furthermore, it states that “Canada's climate commitment is at the least stringent end of what would be a fair share of global effort, and is not consistent with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit, unless other countries make much deeper reductions and comparably greater effort.”^{viii}

Figure 2 illustrates that Canada's policies are insufficient with keeping global warming at or below 1.5°C or 2°C of warming, and presents confidence ranges for emissions reductions for 2.0C and 1.5C-compliant pathways. This shows an estimated value of 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 to be the minimum reductions necessary to be compliant with a 1.5C target.



Country summary

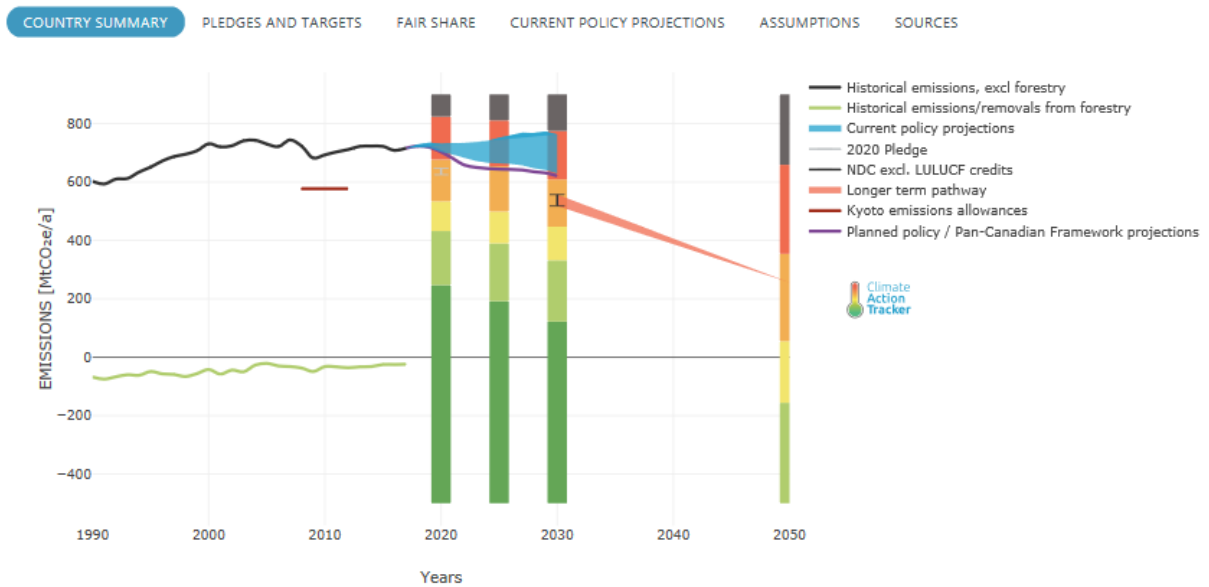


Figure 2. Climate Action Tracker, Canada Profile (Retrieved Oct. 21, 2019)

While the target found in the Sustainable Development Goals Act (53% below 2005 levels by 2030) is the most ambitious in the country, it still does not set us on a pathway of keeping global warming within 1.5°C or 2°C of warming.

Is it Possible?

Globally, there are countries who have set more ambitious GHG reduction targets than the one advocated for by the EAC. The following countries are on track for achieving their targets and are leading the way in demonstrating that it is, in fact, possible:

United Kingdom: 57% below 1990 by 2030

Germany: 55% below 1990 by 2030

Norway: Carbon neutral by 2030

Conclusion

Both the IPCC Special Report of Global Warming of 1.5°C and the Paris Agreement state that GHG targets must be based in science and must represent a jurisdiction's fair share. A legislated target of 53% below 2005 levels by 2030, for Nova Scotia, is a failure on both of these key components because it sets us on track to overshoot 2 degree C of global warming and it is not based on our differentiated responsibility and capability. For this reason, the EAC continues to advocate for a legislated target of 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 (equivalent to 58% below 2005 levels by 2030).

ⁱ Overshoot implies a peak followed by a decline in global warming, achieved through *anthropogenic removal* of CO₂ exceeding remaining CO₂ emissions globally. See also *Overshoot pathways* and *Non-overshoot pathways* (both under *Pathways*). (IPCC Glossary)

ⁱⁱ <https://ourworldindata.org/share-co2-emissions>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>,

^{iv} https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf

^v https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

^{vi} <https://climateactiontracker.org/about/>

^{vii} <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/canada/fair-share/>

^{viii} <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/canada/fair-share/>