

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION

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**Speech at Laval University**

Laval, Quebec

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Students, faculty, friends,

It's a pleasure to be back in Quebec.

And it's a special pleasure to be here at Laval—the oldest francophone university in the Americas—a university that has produced so many Canadians who have shaped our country.

I quite like universities. Stephen Harper sometimes holds that against me.

But so far as I'm concerned, universities are where you find the people and ideas that point the way to a better future.

Today, I want to talk to you about the environment and economic growth.

Because, more than ever, the two go hand-in-hand.

For you—for your generation—that seems obvious.

But it's not obvious to Stephen Harper.

Stephen Harper doesn't understand the economy:

- He has spent more than any government in Canadian history, but instead of investing in the opportunities of tomorrow, he spent our tax dollars on his own political purposes.
- He failed to protect Canadian jobs—and especially jobs for young people. We’ve lost more than half-a-million jobs in the last year.
- He abandoned Canadian champions and made-in-Canada leadership in high-tech fields like nuclear medicine.
- And he cut scientific research.

Stephen Harper doesn’t understand the environment, either:

- He’s turned Canada into a veritable saboteur of international climate change negotiations. It really isn’t all that surprising—remember, it was Stephen Harper who called climate change a “socialist plot.” I’m not kidding. He really said that!
- And now, after four years and three Ministers of the Environment, Canada still doesn’t have a plan, only excuses and pretexts for inaction.
- Stephen Harper put an end to the Canada’s most important national energy efficiency program.
- And, as we speak, Stephen Harper is missing the opportunity of the century: the development of a clean, renewable energy economy.

Global investment in renewable energy reached \$150 billion last year.

And this year, China alone announced \$250 billion in clean energy investment.

Germany has already created more than 250,000 clean energy jobs.

And in the U.S., the Obama administration is investing six times more per capita in clean energy research and development than we are.

In Canada, only one percent of our energy comes from wind and solar.

How have we fallen so far?

A week ago, a new consortium came together to try and force the Harper government to finally invest in renewable energy and clean technology.

Not a group of ecologists. Not “left-wing fringe groups” or “socialists,” like Stephen Harper likes to call them.

It's a consortium of banks, venture capitalists, accounting firms, and, yes, oil companies.

In the words of Albert Behr, a new technology consultant who's part of the consortium: "Canada is falling gravely behind."

Think about it. Even Canada's oil producers want the Harper government to do more for the environment. That's where we stand.

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A few weeks from now, the world will come together in Copenhagen.

I would like to see Canada fighting for a firm international agreement to reduce carbon pollution, based on scientific facts. And the science tells us that we have to contain global warming to within two degrees Celsius to prevent the worst.

Let's be clear. In Copenhagen, I would have supported an agreement by all countries on the planet in favour of measurable, verifiable, and binding targets to reduce carbon pollution.

But we must also understand that developing countries will be reluctant to move towards such binding targets.

I would have wanted Canada to be engaged in playing an important and imaginative role in helping emerging economies set differentiated yet significant targets—targets that are ultimately predictable and binding.

I would have hoped to see Canada accept our own responsibility to reduce carbon pollution, in line with other developed countries.

At Copenhagen, I would have also wanted Canada to seek recognition for the major role that sub-federal jurisdictions like Quebec play in the fight against climate change.

Quebec leads North America in the fight against climate change. Premier Charest wants these efforts to be recognized on the world stage.

I fully support Mr. Charest in this desire for recognition.

Unfortunately, Canada will do none of that in Copenhagen.

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Never before has the world so urgently needed new solutions to develop:

- clean technologies,
- energy efficient vehicles, and
- sustainable transportation.

And we need new technologies:

- to reduce waste,
- to make biomass more profitable,
- to clean-up our waterways, and
- to make our air cleaner.

We need a new approach:

- to protect our forests,
- to preserve our biodiversity, and
- to protect endangered species.

We can turn Canada into a world leader in the new sustainable economy.

We can do it—because right across this country, Canadians have already begun.

Look at how we've changed our own habits in recent years:

We recycle paper.

We sort our trash.

We've started community composts in our municipalities.

We've replaced incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient lighting.

We've installed new programmable thermostats to reduce energy consumption.

In a few short months across Canada, people started using reusable shopping bags.

And Quebecers, meanwhile, are North America's fuel efficiency champions. More hybrid and fuel-efficient vehicles are sold here than anywhere else in North America.

This is how far Canadians have come. And we want to go further.

This is how far our inventors and entrepreneurs have come. And they also want to go further.

This is how far our cities and communities have come. And they also want to do more.

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When it comes to the environment, there's a chasm between what Canadians are ready to do and what our federal government is ready to do.

There's an alternative to the fossil that is the Harper government.

A Liberal government will fight for ambitious targets to reduce carbon pollution. We would set 1990 as our base year, not 2006, so we don't end up punishing provinces that have already taken the lead, like Quebec and Manitoba.

We will quickly put in place a cap-and-trade system. Ideally, such a system would become global. It must be verifiable. It must be binding. And it must lead to absolute reductions in the amount of carbon pollution we spew into the atmosphere.

This cap-and-trade system will put a price on carbon.

You pollute, you pay.

You go green and clean, you get paid—or receive credits.

Even the petroleum sector is in favour of putting in place such a system in Canada.

We need this system to respect certain broad principles:

- The Canadian system must be equitable across all regions of the country.
- It must not penalize those who have already taken the lead.
- It must cover all of Canada's industries, with no exceptions.
- It must also be compatible with an eventual cap-and-trade system in the United States. But that does not mean—and this is key—that we have to wait for Washington before we move forward.
- It must harmonize with systems in place elsewhere in the world. This will allow for carbon pollution credits to be auctioned off, and their value set by market forces. It will also allow for the buying and selling of credits in an international market.

This trade will be the engine of our system. We will harness the force of business to protect our planet.

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In order to fight climate change, a Liberal government would make the most significant investment in clean energy, renewables, new energy sources, and energy efficiency this country has ever seen.

Because we need to recognize that at the heart of everything affecting climate change is the question of energy: the energy we produce, the energy we save, and the energy we'll need.

Our goal would be to quadruple the proportion of renewable energy we use as a country by 2017. There's something real we can do to celebrate our country's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Here's how we'll do it: we'll develop solar, wind, geothermal, and hydrogen. We will invest in making biomass profitable, so our farmers and foresters can profit from the opportunities created by a sustainable economy.

We'll also invest in energy efficiency, because the cleanest energy is the energy we don't use in the first place.

We'll promote green construction and put in place new transit systems to reduce pollution—like high-speed rail. We'll use new energy-saving technologies like “smart-meters” for our homes and businesses, and “smart” electrical grids to reduce wasted energy.

Canadian workers know that saving energy saves jobs. Energy-efficient businesses are more profitable and more competitive.

But energy-efficiency is also a whole industry unto itself. All you have to do is look at building construction to see that a veritable revolution will soon transform the sector. To meet tough international energy-efficiency standards, we'll need new building materials, new construction techniques, and new architectural concepts.

If we wait too long, the billions of dollars that will be invested in the energy-efficient buildings of tomorrow will use products made elsewhere, with technologies created elsewhere. We're talking about jobs here—jobs in R&D and in the lab, and jobs on the factory floor.

There are other examples.

10 or 15 years from now, our cities and our streets will be lit by LED lighting. A company in Nova Scotia is building its own niche in this new market. But they need a government that supports their technologies, assures them a profitable future, and promotes the jobs that come with it.

The development of renewable energies and energy efficiency means investing in innovation. It means hundreds of new businesses and thousands of good jobs for our workers—and for you, too, the engineers, architects, and urban planners of tomorrow.

The jobs of tomorrow are being created today. And we must act now if we don't want to miss the boat.

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Climate change is a crucial issue in itself. But its importance also comes from the fact that it will only worsen the other environmental problems that we face.

We need to put air pollution back on the agenda.

We will adopt the toughest vehicle emissions standards in North America.

We will clean up everything we shoot up the stack—not just carbon pollution, but the other forms of pollution that harm our health and cause asthma, other respiratory problems, and swallow our city skylines in smog.

A Liberal government would adopt a new Clean Energy Act as a framework for our clean and green economy.

Such legislation would improve coordination between the various laws that govern energy and the environment in this country.

This single law would mean less paperwork, reduced delays, and simpler, stronger, more effective environmental assessments.

And as part of our legislation, we'll require the federal government to report annually to Canadians on the state of our environment.

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A Liberal government will also implement measures that will help us adapt to the effects of climate change and protect our environment.

Climate change only accelerates degradation and slows restoration in ecosystems that have already been weakened by excessive resource extraction and pollution. We must, therefore, act on multiple fronts.

To begin with, we need a national freshwater strategy. Our water is a national treasure. It's also a national responsibility.

We'll start by cleaning up the waterway that stands at the centre of our country and our history—from the Great Lakes down the St. Lawrence. And we'll begin the work of cleaning up Lake Winnipeg, one of the most important sources of freshwater in the West.

We'll create new maritime protected areas off our Atlantic and Pacific coasts, to ensure the survival of both our marine ecosystems and our fisheries.

And we'll take action to protect the boreal forest—the lungs of our planet, more powerful than the Amazon. We need to help Quebec and Ontario reach their goal of protecting 50 percent of the boreal forest.

In addition, we will adopt a special environmental plan for the North.

Our Northern strategy will have three objectives:

First, we will work with Inuit and local populations to help them adapt to climate change.

Second, we will defend Canadian sovereignty over the Northwest Passage in all the councils of the world, especially as it becomes a more viable shortcut between Europe and Asia. We need to set the rules for using the Northwest Passage, in agreements that account not only for its fragile environment, but also for the many dangers faced by those who navigate it.

Finally—because the Arctic, one of the planet's most fragile ecosystems, is sure to get busier—we will establish clear rules about what can and cannot be done in the Arctic, where, by whom, and how. Eventually, we will need an international treaty to assure the protection of the whole Arctic, a treaty that respects national sovereignty, and protects the entire region.

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A Liberal government will lead by example.

We would set mandatory clean energy procurement standards.

Government vehicles will be cleaner and government buildings will be energy-efficient.

The federal government will make environmental performance a selection criterion for businesses seeking government contracts—a criterion they will have to respect when providing services.

And because the developing countries who can least afford the cost of climate change will feel its effects the most, a Liberal government will put climate change adaptation at the centre of our international development policy.

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These are the steps we can take right now—to change course, to restore Canada's international reputation, and to build a cleaner, more prosperous new economy that will create the jobs of tomorrow and improve our quality-of-life.

But to take this step forward, we need a government that looks forward, not backward.

That is the government I want to lead.

As Canadians, we have all we need in terms of knowledge, creativity, resources, research and development infrastructure to be champions in this new era.

It's time to set ourselves a new national project—one that brings together our economy, our environment and our best ideas to create the jobs and prosperity of tomorrow.

Thank you.

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