Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources Regarding Bill C-69

April 12, 2019

Dear Honorable Senator,

"The reality is that if we don't act, we're going to see even more severe impacts.... the long-term projections under a high-emissions scenario are very severe," said Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, after the release of Canada's Changing Climate Report.

Canada's climate has been warming at roughly twice the rate of the rest of the world. In Northern Canada, it's even higher. Please pass Bill C-69.

Greed breeds climate change-skeptics who will disagree, but I take my information from scientists and read below to see what the scientists say:

"Canada's climate has warmed and will warm further in the future, driven by human influence. Both past and future warming in Canada is, on average, about double the magnitude of global warming."

“Our climate is not warming consistently. It is most pronounced in the Prairies and British Columbia, and especially severe in northern B.C. The effects are strongest in winter.”

Neil Macdonald is a columnist for CBC News. He says scientists think the scenario is effectively irreversible. The antidote prescribed in the report is politically impossible, at least right now: "Scenarios with limited warming will only occur if Canada and the rest of the world reduce carbon emissions to near zero early in the second half of the century."

The scientists predict an eventual increase in "annual average country-wide temperature" of about two degrees Celsius, a rate that will remain steady after mid-century. “ They say the increase could be as severe as six degrees.

The oceans around Canada have become more acidic and less oxygenated. Future warming will be heaviest in ice-free waters of the Canadian arctic. Most Canadians can expect coastal flooding to increase during their lifetimes.

Warming of the oceans, in particular, is extremely serious.

According to the report: "Ocean warming and loss of oxygen will intensify with further emissions of all greenhouse gases, whereas ocean acidification will increase in response to additional carbon dioxide emissions. These changes threaten the health of marine ecosystems." Tall ice cliffs are slumping and may trigger rapid sea-level rise, the study finds.
“Rainfall is increasing, although less so in the summer months. As warming continues, Canada (of all places) will likely face freshwater shortages.”

Those are just the highlights. The main takeaway: if climate change worldwide is much more frightening and immediate than we all thought, as the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported six months ago, it's at least twice as bad in Canada.

If senators do not think this is a national emergency, then I am not sure what else can be conveyed to the senate. **Please pass Bill C-69.**

If polluting fossil fuel corporations are permitted to continue to twist the truth with their renditions of how grateful we should all be and how they have improved so much, then precious time is wasted day after day without any real leadership or action on Canada’s part.

The only thing that really matters in life is action.

**Neoliberalism** is a serious failure – obviously a life-threatening failure. Since the 80’s, the people of Canada have handed the corporations our democracy along with our tax money. Time to take back democracy for the people of this land.

The Nunavut governing system works so well because the people have the power – not the corporations. And it was obvious listening to their testimony at the hearings.

**Orphan Wells and leaking pipelines:** I question the Alberta Energy Regulator’s answer to orphan wells in Alberta. Firstly, if they are being dealt with so competently, then why did the Supreme Court have to take time to get involved and rule on proper responsibilities? Why are there 5,000 orphan wells leaking methane which is 20 X more potent a GHG in the first 20 years than CO2?

Why do some resident’s wells become contaminated with chemicals? Why can some residents light the water coming out of their taps on fire? Why are chemical ponds not surrounded with fencing? Why are moose found with so much cancer in their bodies that they are not safe to eat? Why is wildlife drinking from chemical ponds? And why are birds allowed to fly in and drink from a chemical pond? Why are fish found with cancerous sores on their bodies and disfigured with birth defects?

**Fracking:** Is anyone responsible for mapping the fissures underground from fracking? Does anyone know exactly what chemicals are underground and where they are due to fracking? What is healthy or safe about earthquakes in areas where underground chemicals are not defined and not mapped?

Who is in charge of environmental risks and health effects from fracking, benzene and leaking methane from wells and pipelines? **Please pass Bill C-69.**
Our environmental laws: Projects take time to prepare truthful, factual, independent peer-reviewed science and timelines should never be dictated by corporations. We should never limit the democratic processes in favour of corporations. Legislation must be able to accommodate new science studies as they come forward. We must always make time for truth.

Citizens need time to come forward. We need to engage regional stakeholders early in a transparent way. Social justice takes time. After all, we are the Canadians taking all the risks. Our environments are taking all the risks. All life is taking all the risks.

We need science on the upstream and downstream risks and cumulative impacts of projects. We need to evaluate the acceptability of a project “in the public interest”. And whatever we do will affect people all over the world. An accident somewhere affects everyone everywhere.

We need to pass Environmental Bill of Rights legislation also. The acceptability of a project should be based on keeping all of our climate commitments and should include only projects that comply with the Sustainable Development Goals.

I believe the latest climate report makes adherence to our climate goals mandatory – not iffy. We must stop our destructive ways of thinking and governing immediately. The political will and the will of all of us must come together quickly for our children’s future.

Let’s do what is right. NOW. Let’s get on with our way to zero. NOW. Let’s save our children NOW. Please pass Bill C-69.

For the fragility of the Earth’s system, I submit my plea,

Mary Ann Shannon

Terrace, B.C.