

*Community-Based Research Responding to Crises:*

# Leveraging Community-Engaged Research to Improve Climate Journalism

12-1pm Eastern Time | April 17, 2025

Presented by: **Tara Mahoney**



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD

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# CBRCanada operates from the Haldimand Tract



The CBRCanada secretariat operates from the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Attawandron (Neutral) peoples.

The Haldimand Treaty promised a tract of 6 miles of land on either side of the Grand River to the Six Nations of the Grand River.





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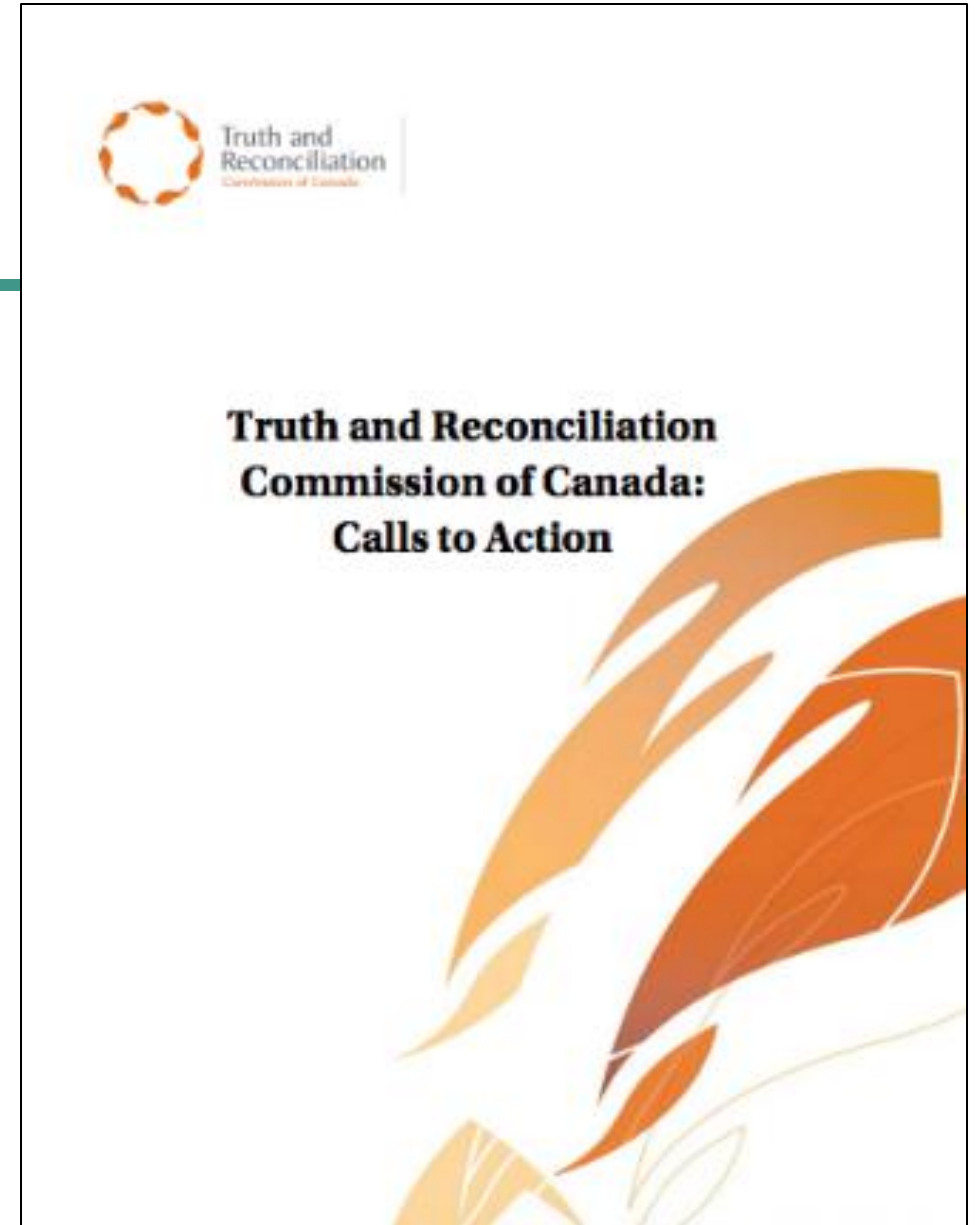


**Community Based Research Canada**



# Call to Action #86

“We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations.”



# Agenda

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**Opening**



**Presentation**



**Q&A**



**Closing**

# Presenters

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**Tara Mahoney** (she/her)

Research and Engagement Manager

Community Engaged Research Initiative (CERi)

Simon Fraser University





# Agenda

- Quiet Alarm: A Review of CBC's Climate Reporting
- Covering Climate Elections: Lessons From British Columbia's 2024 Election and Beyond
- Key Takeaways for Community-Engaged Research



July 2023

# Quiet Alarm

A REVIEW OF  
CBC'S CLIMATE  
REPORTING



## COVERING CLIMATE ELECTIONS

LESSONS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA'S  
2024 ELECTION AND BEYOND





# Quiet Alarm

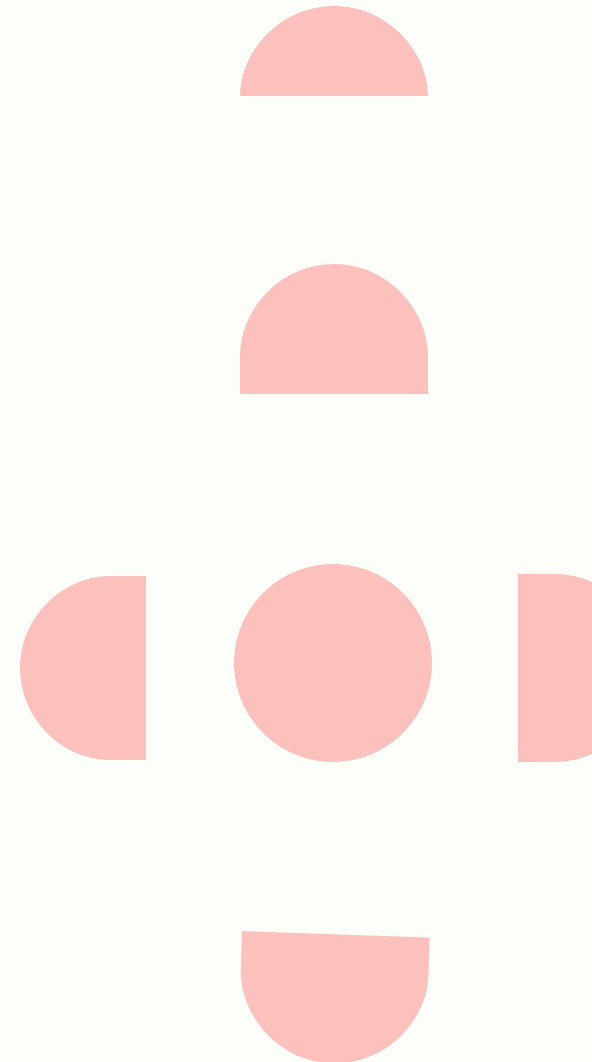
A REVIEW OF CBC'S CLIMATE REPORTING

# Programs monitored

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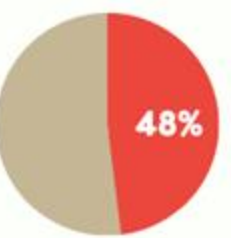
Volunteers reviewed the following programs on weekdays between April 24 to May 5.

- The National
- The World at Six
- The Current
- On The Island (Victoria)
- The Early Edition (Vancouver)
- Calgary Eyeopener
- Edmonton AM
- Metro Morning (Toronto)
- Ottawa Morning
- Daybreak Montreal
- Information Morning (Mainland Nova Scotia)
- World Report

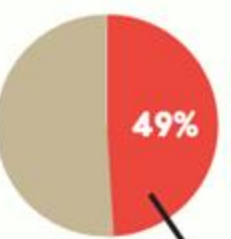




# We found that...



Only 48% of the broadcasts monitored had a single climate item\*, including stories about extreme weather events.

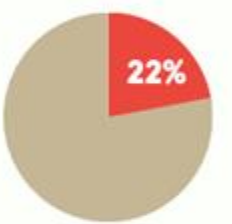


49% of the 96 climate items encountered were about extreme weather events – particularly wildfires in Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan, and flooding in Quebec and British Columbia in the first week of May.

78% of those items failed to mention that climate change makes extreme weather events more frequent and severe.



Only 9% of all climate items mentioned the burning of fossil fuels as the primary cause of climate change.



22% of the climate items clearly discussed solutions to climate change, with volunteers reporting they were unsure if there were solutions discussed 11% of the time.



Only 6% of the climate items clearly communicated that there are things the audience could do to address the climate crisis, with volunteers unsure if they did or not 3% of the time. When actions were offered, 73% of them were individual actions or consumer choices while 27% were collective or political actions.

# Findings

1

The CBC *is* doing good climate journalism — in some spaces. But...

2

Climate news is sporadic, inconsistent and often absent in daily programming.

3

CBC's climate stories are not regularly making the connection between the burning of fossil fuels, extreme weather and the climate crisis.

4

Solutions are out there, but Canadians are not hearing them.

5

Politicians set the story, but are among the least trusted messengers about climate.

6

Canadians are not hearing from a diversity of impacted communities.

7

The climate connection can be made stronger across beats.

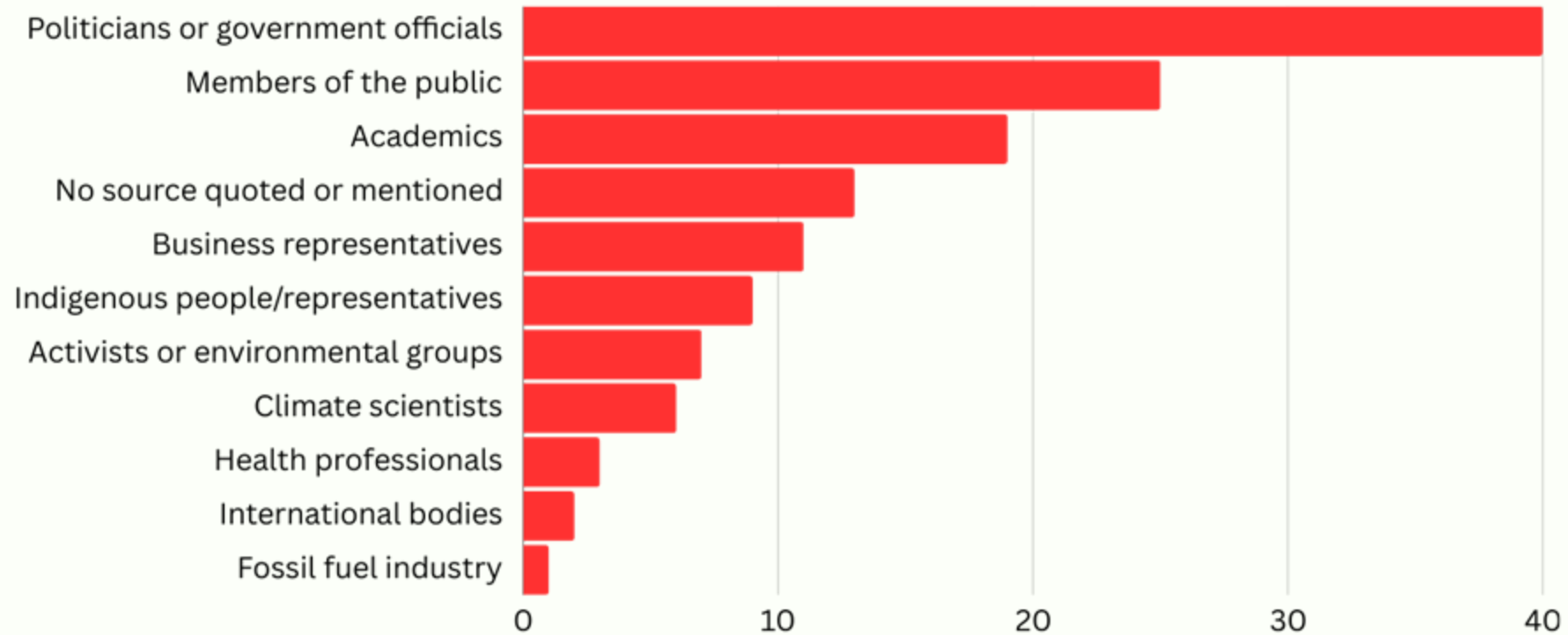


## **Finding 5:**

**Politicians set the story, but are among the least trusted messengers about climate**



# Sources quoted in the climate items

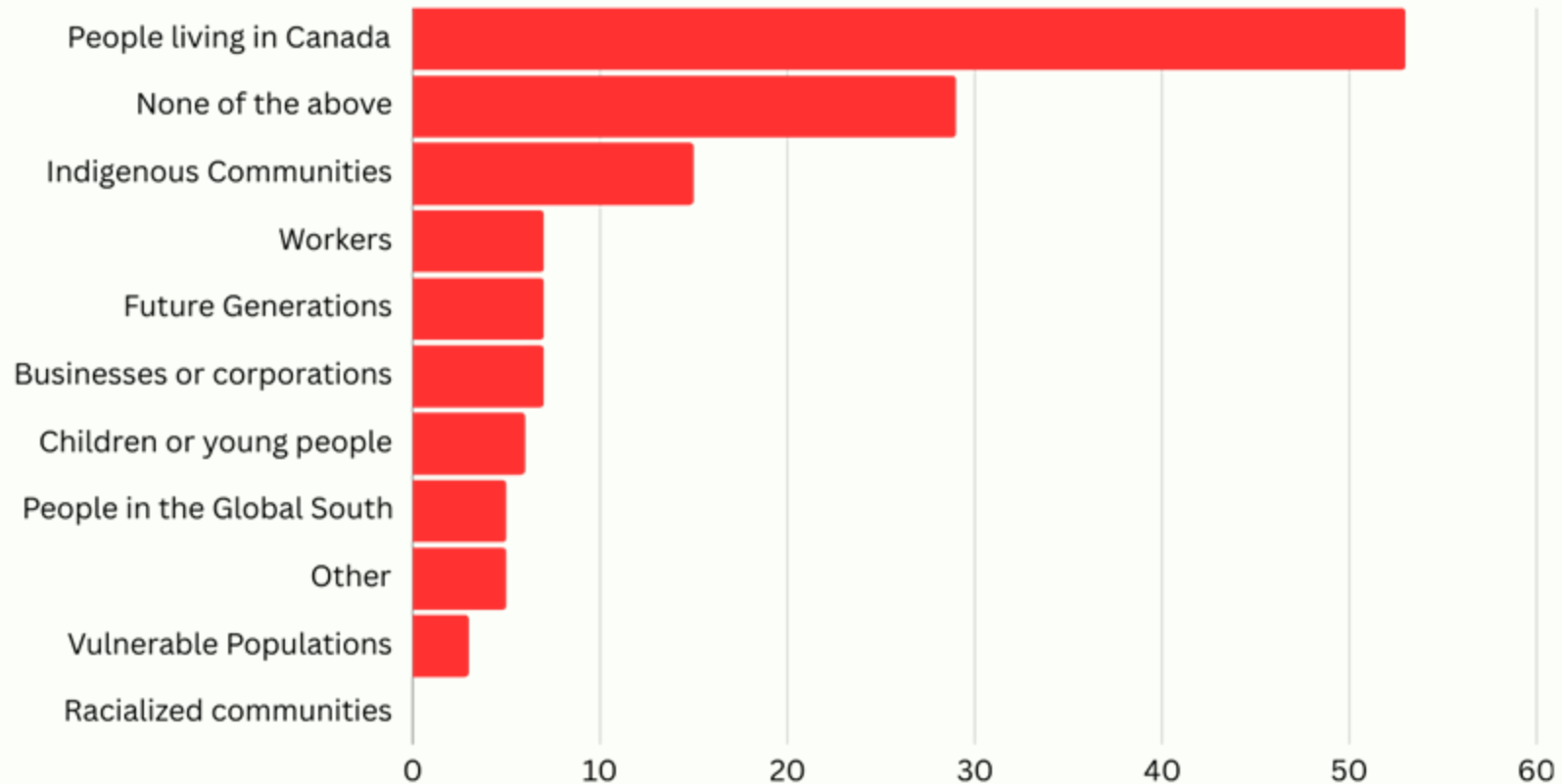




## **Finding 6:**

**Canadians are not hearing from a diversity of impacted communities**

# Communities impacted by the climate crisis







## Finding 7:

The climate connection can be made stronger across beats

# Recommendations

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- 1** Make the connection between the causes of the climate crisis, its consequences and the communities impacted to improve climate literacy in Canada
- 2** Develop and implement climate and environment-specific standards and language within the Journalistic Standards and Practices
- 3** Provide training on basic climate science, policy and best practices for climate communication so that every journalist is equipped to report on this crisis across beats
- 4** Join Covering Climate Now
- 5** Provide more international coverage of global cooperation efforts to mitigate climate change and how the climate crisis disproportionately impacts the Global South and Indigenous and marginalized communities everywhere.
- 6** Report annually about CBC's climate reporting to ensure that you are covering, in frequency and substance, the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions and their impacts, and providing the information Canadians need in an emergency.
- 7** Develop a daily climate emergency report for flagship local and national news and current affairs shows



Climate Emergency Broadcast demo #1  
July 7, 2023



## Climate Emergency Broadcast samples

### SPEAKERS:

- Ziya Tong
- Seth Klein
- Anjali Appadurai

### PRESENTED BY:



### WITH SUPPORT FROM:





News Editor's Blog · EDITOR'S BLOG

## Climate journalism remains a top priority for CBC News

FOR SUBSCRIBERS CANADA

### David Suzuki, Peter Mansbridge, and other prominent ex-broadcasters are calling out CBC. Here's why

Here's what David Suzuki says needs to be done to address an escalating crisis that affects us all.

CANADA'S  
NATIONAL  
OBSERVER

CANADA'S  
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## Opinion | Why Peter Mansbridge, David Suzuki and Adrienne Clarkson are wrong about climate change and the CBC

Updated Dec. 12, 2024 at 5:03 p.m. | Oct. 24, 2024 | 6 min read

## CBC must strengthen its case for our – and its own – survival

By Seth Klein | Opinion | June 3rd 2024

### Rile up public to see climate change like WWII, a pandemic: journalist panel

By Cosmin Dzsurdza · December 4, 2023

# Climate alarmism won't save the CBC

By Max Fawcett | Opinion, Politics | October 15th 2024

# COVERING CLIMATE ELECTIONS

LESSONS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA'S  
2024 ELECTION AND BEYOND



# ABOUT THIS STUDY

## Programs monitored:



**THE EARLY EDITION (CBC)**

7:00-8:30 a.m.



**THE MIKE SMYTH SHOW  
(CKNW)**

9:00 a.m. - noon



**ON THE COAST (CBC)**

3:00 - 6:00 p.m.



**THE JAS JOHAL SHOW  
(CKNW)**

3:00 - 6:00 p.m.



**CBC VANCOUVER  
NEWS AT 6**

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.



**CTV NEWS  
VANCOUVER AT 6**

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.



**GLOBAL NEWS HOUR AT 6  
(VANCOUVER)**

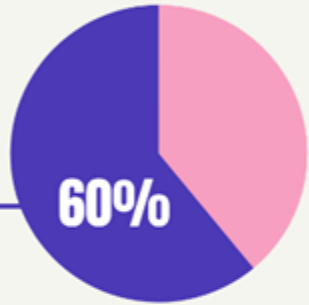
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

We recruited 31 volunteers to listen to various prominent radio and television broadcast shows across British Columbia. To capture a diversity of programming in B.C., we built a list of public and commercial radio shows and three evening television news programs. Volunteers monitored these shows for four weeks of programming, both before and after the 2024 provincial election, from October 7 to November 1 .



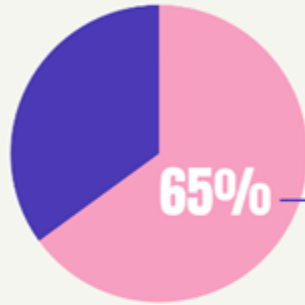
# BY THE NUMBERS

## Energy and policy issues lacked climate context:

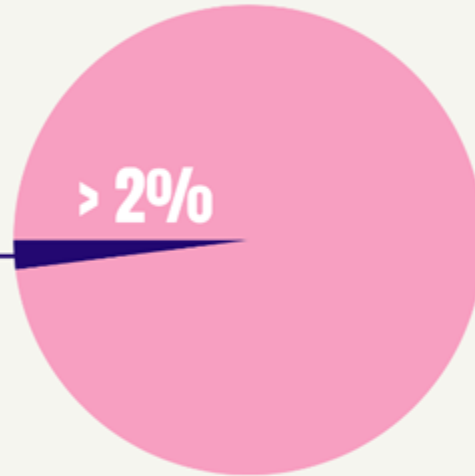


• The majority of carbon tax mentions (60%) failed to mention climate change, leaving out crucial context. The Early Edition and On The Coast, however, were notable exceptions, addressing climate change in a majority of segments that mentioned the carbon tax.

Similarly, 65% of mentions of LNG failed to discuss climate change.

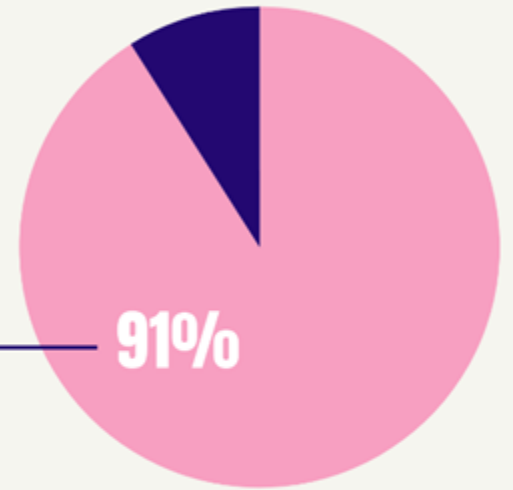


## Climate left out of the evening news:



• **Less than 2%** of evening TV news broadcasts focused on the role of climate change in the election. Volunteers **recorded only 1** in-depth climate election item throughout the 53-election related broadcasts from the three local 6 o'clock news hour broadcasts (Global, CTV, CBC), and heard climate change mentioned only 8 times, of which the majority was from CBC.

## Election climate discourse lacked depth:



• Roughly 91% of broadcasts that covered the election did not offer an in-depth<sup>16</sup> discussion of climate change or a climate issue.

# KEY FINDINGS

- 1 **In-depth climate reporting was predominantly left out** of election coverage, despite near-daily election reporting on party platforms, policy development, leadership dynamics, candidate profiles and debates, forecasting, polling, and post-election analysis.
- 2 There were **many missed opportunities to ask the climate question** including interviews with voters and specific constituencies like youth and business owners, discussions about the leaders' debate, panels with mayors and Indigenous leaders, party platform analyses, and interviews with party leaders and candidates.
- 3 Election coverage is **not making the climate connection** to key issues such as affordability, inflation, extreme weather and emergency preparedness and the economy. Coverage is also not always making the climate connection between party platforms and energy policies like the carbon tax and LNG.
- 4 Volunteers noticed a **bias toward the fossil-fuel economy**. As one volunteer remarked, some broadcasters focused more on the economic costs of climate action, such as the impact of carbon taxes or the transition away from fossil fuels, without equally addressing the potential cost savings, long-term environmental and social benefits of addressing the climate emergency head-on.
- 5 There was a **lack of public engagement** during which voters were asked directly (through interviews, polls, and call-in segments) about their views on climate issues and how those views were influencing their vote.

## WHAT THE VOLUNTEERS HEARD...

We asked volunteers if segments in the broadcasts they monitored could or should have mentioned climate change...Here's what they said:

"They talked about housing prices, healthcare, crime - anything but climate change."

"They were mentioning terms like carbon tax and LNG without any discussion or focus on the climate."

"A piece about the Conservatives platform should stress on the fact that climate change was missing from the Conservatives' platform."

"They could have talked about how climate change affects agricultural issues and then mentioned how political parties need to address the climate change aspect of agriculture as well."

"A discussion about the urgent issue of climate catastrophe was notably lacking in the (leaders') debate and should have been highlighted in the broadcast."

"Climate change seems to be a major issue for young people so I thought it might be mentioned in the one-on-one panel with B.C. Federation of Students representative. It was not."



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## 1 **Make the climate connection to other election issues.**

Segments discussing housing, transportation, jobs, food security, energy policy, public safety, affordability, cost of living, inflation, trade, the economy, healthcare, extreme weather, emergency preparedness, and Indigenous rights all have a clear and relevant intersection with climate change. See [Covering Climate Now's Climate Elections Guide](#) (Appendix 1).

## 2 **Ask the climate question.**

Just because a politician does not mention climate change during a speech, debate, or interview, does not mean that climate should be left out of the final story. Even if climate change isn't mentioned by someone running for office, it is important to note down the absence as part of the story. This includes questioning why climate change does not appear to be a top priority for voters or politicians.

## 3 **Explore the climate consequences of proposed energy policies.**

Journalists can explore the economic risks and benefits, long-term sustainability and intergenerational climate impacts of energy policies (such as LNG development, mining projects, or carbon taxes) without advocating for specific policies, helping the public make informed decisions, and holding leaders accountable.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## 4 **Make the cause and effect of climate change clear.**

The primary cause of climate change and extreme weather – the burning of fossil fuels – needs to be made clear at every opportunity. The economic effects of climate change (costs associated with extreme weather, health impacts, home insurance, etc.) should be highlighted for voters to demonstrate how climate is factoring into their daily lives.

## 6 **Use extreme weather events as opportunities to enhance climate literacy during an election.**

By explicitly connecting past extreme weather events (and ongoing impacts) to climate change and the burning of fossil fuels, journalists can help the public understand the long-term implications of extreme weather and hold candidates accountable for how they will address local climate change impacts and implement adaptation measures.

## 10 **Deepen capacity to produce more and better climate stories during elections.**

There are many ways to do this, from integrating climate/environment reporters with the politics desk, or by holding staff training on making the climate connection in reporting around the newsroom.



# CANADA'S ELECTION AND THE TRUMP EFFECT: PRIORITIZING CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEWS MEDIA

## ROUNDTABLE

### SPEAKERS



Kamyar Razavi



Morgan Krakow



Rachel Doran

### FACILITATOR



Tara Mahoney



# Key Takeaways for CER

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- Community Partnerships
  - Co-creation with partners and core constituency (media workers)
- Knowledge Mobilization
  - Theory of Change
  - Outreach and media strategy
- Volunteers
  - Citizen social science
- **Research-as-Community Organizing / ‘Climate Action Research’**

# Climate Action Research...

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1. A form of community organizing that uses research as its catalyst.
2. Aims for systemic, practical, and/or relational change.
3. Acts as a catalyst by building relationships, expanding agency, and linking lived experience with policy and creative practice
4. Guided by a clear theory of change: “If we do this research, then this change could/will happen.”
5. Community-led and focused on specific outcomes.
6. Even without full success, the process fosters useful relationships and momentum for change.



# Thank you

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# Question and Answer

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12-1pm Eastern Time | May 8, 2025

Presented by: **Danijela Puric-Mladenovic  
& Judy Gibson**



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