

Professional Leadership in a Changing Climate: Joint Statement

Preamble

Professionals are required to use the best available science in making our decisions, and so we, the resource and planning professional associations of British Columbia, recognize that climate change is occurring and it has fundamental impacts on British Columbia's communities and ecosystems. We know the importance of both reducing the presence of greenhouse gases in the global atmosphere (climate change mitigation) and in adapting our society and ecosystems to prepare for climatic changes (climate change adaptation).

Our members have crucial roles to play in both climate change mitigation and adaptation; their knowledge, expertise and professionalism are key parts of the solution. But they also have important professional and ethical responsibilities related to the changing climate. Professional associations have an obligation to define those responsibilities and to provide the training and structures that will allow members to meet their responsibilities to their clients and to the public.

1. Commitment of Professional Associations

We endeavour to develop organizational structures and strategies that will foster an innovative and proactive approach to our professional practices in light of a changing climate.

In particular, we, collectively:

- Recognize the professional and ethical implications of climate change for professionals.
- Expect our members to build upon their current science-based, knowledge-driven approaches to better incorporate the best available climate-science into professional decisions.
- Strive to review and comment on policies and legislation that are known to prevent innovative practice.
- Will stay up to date on current and past practices, with an aim to better informing our members on best practices in light of climate change.
- In the course of practice reviews and/or responding to complaints, will evaluate key professional decisions made by our members to ensure that they include appropriate consideration of climatic changes.
- Accept that innovation to address a changing climate may involve some uncertainty or risk.
- Collaborate between ourselves, other professional associations, and other agencies, on opportunities for educating and training our members in climate change adaptation science and best practices.
- Work with different levels of government and other agencies to identify what information our members need to effectively address climate change and to communicate that information to our members.
- Work with different levels of government, insurers and other parties to address shared risks

arising from climate change, including identifying incentives for professionals to innovate and share the costs and benefits of adaptive management.

- We commit to continue to meet periodically as required to collaborate on supporting climate change adaptation efforts.

2. Need for Government Leadership

But the efforts of our members and our respective associations to address climate change will be most effective if they are supported through strong action and leadership by government. We applaud the province of British Columbia's leadership in addressing climate change and urge the government to continue this leadership.

We make the following submissions to government:

- **Provincial leadership on Crown lands:** The province should lead climate change adaptation efforts on provincial crown lands.
- **Invest in climate data acquisition:** We urge federal, provincial and municipal governments to continue to invest in climate data acquisition so as to enable professionals to adopt an adaptive management approach.
- **Gap analysis of existing laws and policies:** We recommend that all levels of government should review existing laws and policies in light of climate change to ensure that:
 - Proponents, clients, license holders and professionals consider climate change in decision making.
 - Ensure there are mechanisms for proponents, clients, license holders and professionals to innovate and address shared risks related to climate adaptation.
- **Proactively identify adaptation initiatives for implementation:** All levels of government should be proactive in identifying and providing incentives for professionals to step up adaptation efforts through pilot studies, implementation of new standards, as well as on-going research and development.

Conclusion

The members of our organizations have the expertise, and the responsibility, to help British Columbia and Canada adapt to a changing climate. We hope that when we reflect back on this statement in 20 years, we will see that it was an important and necessary step towards addressing climate change. We will continue working with each other, and other professionals and sectors, in playing a crucial role in addressing climate change. We will revisit and review this document within 3 years, in light of evolving climate science.

Adopted by:

Association of BC Forest Professionals

Association of Professional Biologists

College of Applied Biology

Planning Institute of British Columbia