

This summer, a staggering one in four Canadians faced climate impacts

Mayors, councillors across Canada call for investments in “nation-building, not nation-burning” infrastructure projects

OTTAWA, ON, September 24, 2025 – A coalition of over 250 municipal leaders from across Canada released a new analysis today that shows at least [200 communities](#)—from **Yellowknife to Fredericton and Kawartha Lakes to Montreal**—experienced climate-related impacts this summer. This means that **one in four Canadians** – more than 15 million people – **were faced with evacuations, unsafe air quality, extreme heat or severe storms in their communities**. Nearly 40 non-Indigenous and [88 Indigenous communities](#) were evacuated this summer alone. Those impacts are ongoing: [410 wildfires](#) continue to burn, and tens of thousands have been displaced.

Against the backdrop of this summer of fire, smoke and widespread climate impacts, the coalition of municipal leaders known as *Elbows Up for Climate* voiced disappointment that fossil fuel expansion projects were included on the federal government's recently announced list of “fast track” national projects.

“LNG Canada is both a carbon bomb and an [entirely foreign-owned project](#): what happened to ‘Elbows Up’?” **says David Miller, former mayor of Toronto and co-chair of the *Elbows Up for Climate* campaign**. “This is a moment for investing in nation-building, not nation-burning projects.”

“At a time when one in four Canadians is already experiencing the effects of climate disasters, it is time to stop pitting environmental concerns against our other priorities. Canadians expect all levels of government to direct their investments toward choices that support both the economy and the climate transition. Let’s seize the opportunity offered by our neighbors to the south to create wealth by investing in sustainable projects that will tangibly improve the quality of life for citizens across the country.” said **Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montreal and co-chair of the *Elbows Up For Climate* campaign**.

Nation-building for a safe and prosperous Canada

The analysis was conducted by *Elbows Up for Climate*, a coalition of leaders representing Canadians from across the country. Formed this spring, these leaders are pushing for investments in national infrastructure to protect Canada from the dual threats of U.S. tariffs and climate change. Local leaders are once again putting forward an alternative path for nation-building projects, echoing their [call](#) to federal party leaders ahead of last spring's election:

- Build a national clean electricity grid;
- Build two million non-market, energy-efficient home;
- Retrofit all low-income homes and multi-unit residential building;
- Build a national high-speed rail and intercity bus system;
- Implement and fund a national resilience, response and recovery strategy.

This comes as the [Canadian Climate Institute](#) reports that **progress on reducing Canada's national greenhouse gas emissions stalled in 2024**. Without coordinated policy action, the report suggests emissions could continue to rise, citing recent setbacks in federal and provincial policies putting the country's climate progress at risk.

"Together, we can tackle climate change and protect our quality of life across the country. Many elected officials like me are working to make a difference locally, in our cities and municipalities. The real challenge now is ensuring that our actions reflect our values at every level of government. We need to invest in transformative, low-carbon projects for our communities. It's about putting our principles into practice," **underscores Marc-André Guertin, Mayor of Mont-Saint-Hilaire.**

"We have an incredible opportunity to invest in a future for Canada that protects our communities from climate impacts and creates a new generation of jobs," **says Yellowknife mayor, Ben Hendriksen.** "When people say that moving to a low carbon future is too costly – I think the costs of evacuations, rising insurance premiums, health impacts and damage to traditional ways of life are all undervalued in that calculation."

"Jasper knows all too well the challenges and the heartbreak of evacuation, and responding to and recovering from climate disaster. We share the hurt, loss and frustration of the over 200 Canadian communities which have since experienced their own climate catastrophes." **says Jasper Mayor Richard Ireland.** "The time for a national, funded strategy for community resilience, response and recovery is way past due. Protecting communities and mitigating the impacts from climate change catastrophe protects lives, property and local economies."

“On the ground, we are linking arms—First Nations, rural municipalities, and cities—because wildfire smoke and unsafe air know no boundaries. But local governments can’t do it alone. The federal government must treat this as a nation-building moment: invest in clean air shelters, resilient housing, and infrastructure that keeps Canadians safe because the climate crisis is hitting and Cities can tell you it hurts.” **says Sherri Rollins, Fort Rouge–East Fort Garry City Councillor in Winnipeg.**

“Nation-building projects are only beneficial if they are decarbonized, respect Treaty rights and work to protect nature, not destroy it. To perpetuate pipelines and burning things when the world is moving away from these loses sight of the available, cleaner options that create jobs, improve air quality and prevent premature deaths.” underlines **Margo Sheppard, Fredericton City Councillor.**

"In Regina, we are particularly susceptible to wildfire smoke from fires near and far. This summer, Regina was also host to over 1,200 evacuees fleeing wildfires. We know that climate change is causing more intense fires like the ones we dealt with this summer, and there are readily available alternatives to the expansion of fossil fuels. We need nation-building projects that prioritize clean and renewable energies--like solar and wind--that are still vastly under-developed and could revitalize energy-based economies, like ours in Regina. This is the innovative thinking we need to boost our nation's economy," **states Shanon Zachidniak, Regina City Councillor.**

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About *Elbows Up for Climate*

[Elbows Up for Climate](#) is a campaign of over 250 local elected leaders from across Canada. They believe this is the moment for Canada to fight back by investing in national projects that will connect and protect the country from the dual threats of tariffs and climate change.

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