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Untapped Potential:

Driving Canadian Prosperity Through Natural Resources

Business Council *of* British Columbia
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The Importance of Canada's Natural Resource Sectors

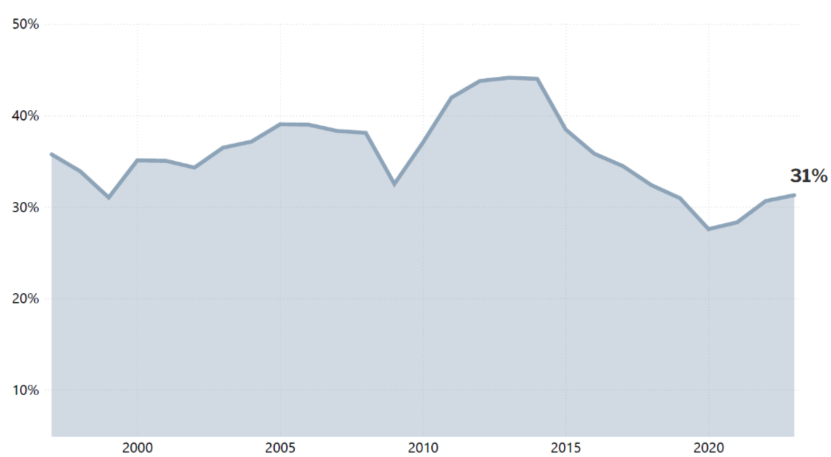
Canada is a vast country rich in natural wealth—from expansive forests to some of the world's largest energy reserves to an abundance of minerals and metals to fertile farmlands, lakes and oceans.

Natural resources are more than just commodities; they are the backbone of our economy.

Across the country, millions of Canadians—from skilled tradespeople to farmers to engineers and entrepreneurs—bring these resources to life, driving local prosperity and shaping our global reputation as a leader in resource development. This extends from the primary industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing, utilities, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas, to "downstream" industries that depend heavily on resource-based inputs, such as pipeline transportation and resource manufacturing.

All together, natural resource-related industries account for 17% of GDP, 70% of goods exports, 30% of capital investment, and offer some of the highest paying jobs in the country. Their benefits ripple through the broader economy, sustaining jobs in small businesses, retail, and housing markets nationwide.

Natural resources contribute substantially to Canada's total business investment
Natural resource sector investment as a share of Canada's total non-residential investment



Source: Statistics Canada Table: 36-10-0096 & 36-10-0401-01
Note: 2017 constant prices, 2022 & 2023 are estimates based of own calculations.

But, over the last decade, Canada's economy has fallen behind.

Our economy has barely grown over the last ten years. Canada has had the third-weakest growth in real GDP per capita among 38 OECD countries over the past decade. Canadian business investment per capita is almost one-quarter lower than 2014 as rising tax burdens and costly regulatory approaches have taken their toll.

Part of the reason for Canada's decline is that we have failed to embrace our competitive advantage in natural resources. At best, government policy has neglected our resource potential. At worst, it has actively worked against it. It will be up to the next government to correct the course.

More specifically, the layering of federal policies and regulations on top of existing carbon-pricing mechanisms have added costs and increased uncertainty when it comes to investing in, and maximizing the potential of, Canada's resource industries. This expanding web of regulatory requirements includes the Clean Electricity Regulations, the Clean Fuel Regulations, Bills C-69 and C-48, and others, such as the proposed Oil and Gas Sector Emissions Cap. All that, on top of more sector-specific regulatory challenges.

In short, policies to reduce emissions have been short-sighted. Instead of enabling economic growth through innovation and leadership on global emissions, they have taken a narrow approach to emissions management, focusing on lowering *domestic* emissions by constraining economic activity. This has merely shifted economic activity to other countries, resulting in no impact on global emissions and eroding economic opportunity for Canadians.

As well, the resource sector understands that Indigenous consultation and economic participation are essential for major projects. However, the federal government has failed to give clear direction, often avoiding tough decisions to sidestep political risk. This inaction has stalled investment, delayed projects, and cost both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities' valuable economic opportunities.

And now Canada faces another threat.

The Trump administration's trade, tax and regulatory policies pose a major threat to Canada's natural resource sector. Oil and gas companies may respond by investing more south of the border to avoid tariffs. Likewise, value-added food manufacturing businesses may be swayed by strong incentives to operate in the US. Some have already made the choice to move.

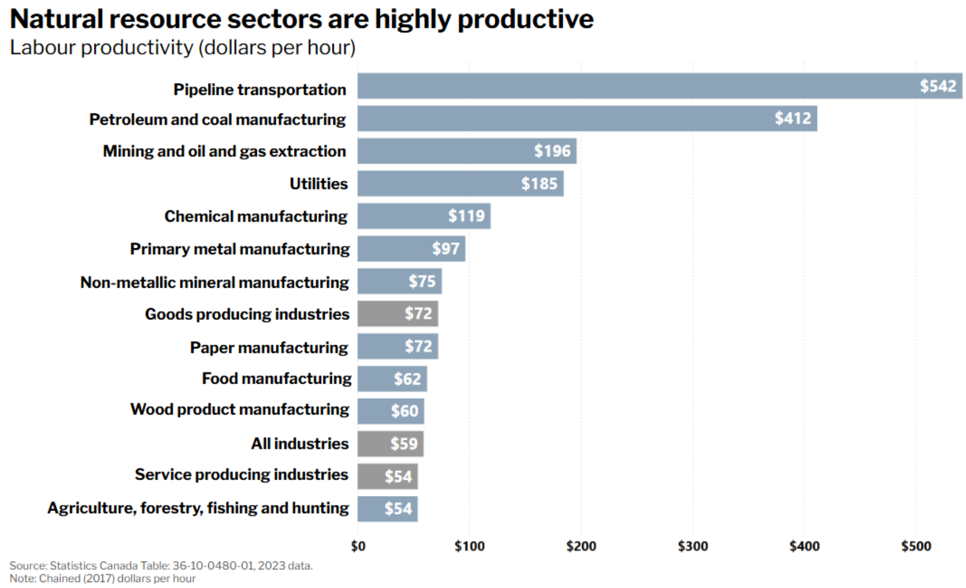
But we can do better. Natural resources—one of Canada's key competitive advantages—offer not only an opportunity to drive future growth and resilience but are also a vital geopolitical asset in a world looking for trusted suppliers of food, energy, and other critical resources.

Furthermore, global demand for resources is growing. By 2050, food production must grow by 70% while energy production must grow by 50%. If producers fail to meet this demand, consumer affordability will be at risk.

Countries are already knocking on Canada's door for our resources—from crude oil, to natural gas, to fertilizer, to critical minerals, and more. But we've inexplicably passed over those opportunities, seemingly looking for reasons to say no. We need to look for ways to say yes—and to be that trusted and reliable global supplier.

Meanwhile, as the world searches for lower greenhouse-gas-intensive energies, products, and supply chains, Canada has many competitive advantages. With vast reserves of the cobalt, graphite, and lithium essential to produce electric vehicles, experience with advanced manufacturing, and expertise in emissions-reducing technologies like carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS), Canada can play a pivotal role in the global supply chain for a low-carbon economy.

The benefits of embracing these opportunities are tremendous.



But to fulfil our resource potential, Canada will need to be more competitive. We need policies that support—not hinder—economic growth. Policies that foster an environment that attracts investment, drives innovation, and enables resource development.

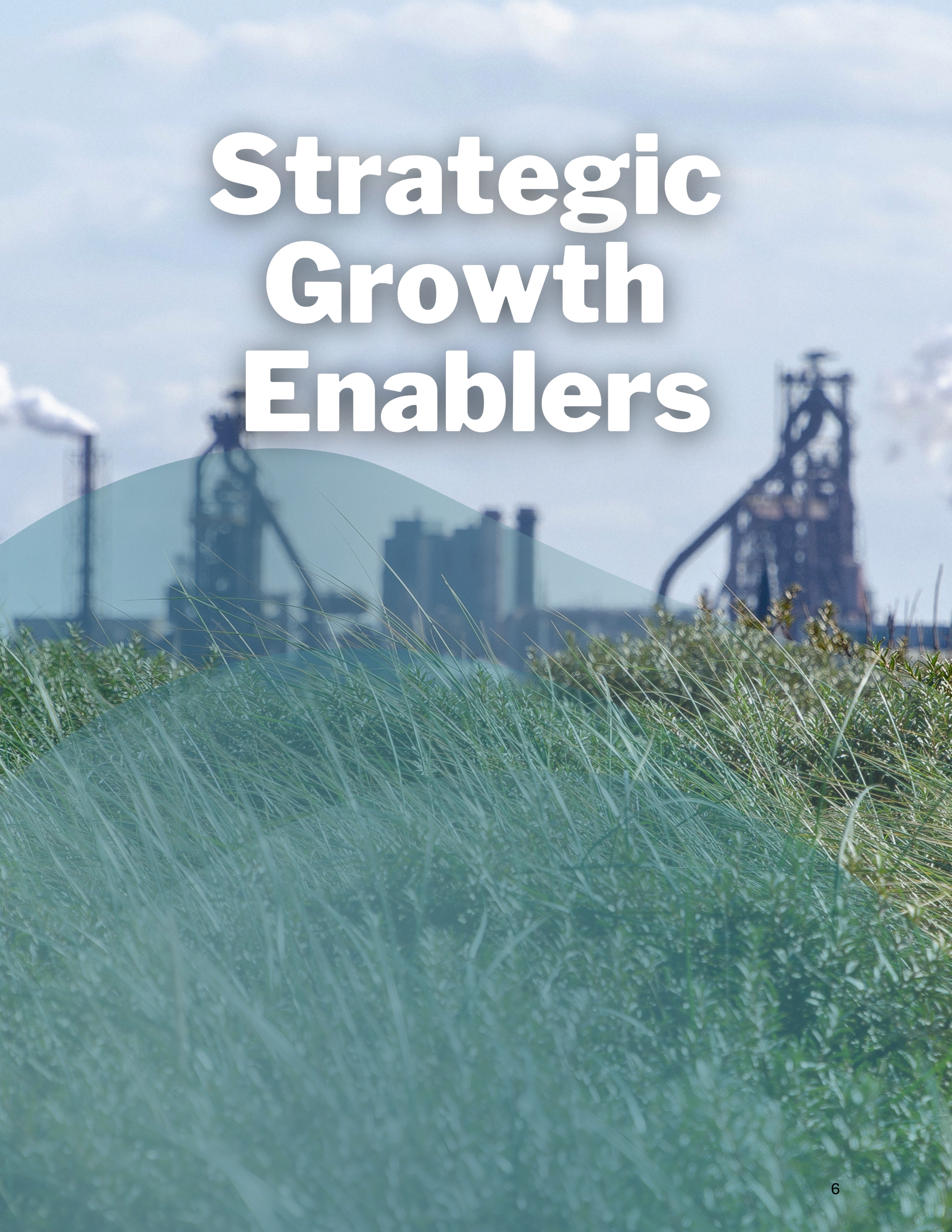
We must reduce regulatory burdens and uncertainty by streamlining project approvals and ensuring a clear and predictable framework for Indigenous consultation and economic participation. We must think bigger—by considering the implications of policy decisions on the entire sector, not just one part of the supply chain, and by prioritizing what's best for Canada. We must also take a global perspective when it comes to the demand for resources and the need to reduce emissions. Canada has a responsibility to meet global demand with Canadian resources that are higher in environmental standards and lower in emissions.

To build that policy environment requires doing better in areas that will enable growth across *all* resource industries, as well as paying attention to specific needs and challenges within each. As such, ***Canada's untapped potential – driving Canadian prosperity through natural resources***, is split into two chapters:

- **Strategic Growth Enablers** outlines five overarching federal policy priorities that are essential for the success of the resource sector writ large; and
- **Targeted Industry Solutions** details policies to remove barriers and drive growth in five key industries: oil and gas, agriculture, forestry, critical minerals and mining, and aquaculture.

The next government of Canada faces a critical choice: continue with policies that limit investment, development and growth, or create a competitive environment that allows the resource sector to thrive. By embracing its natural advantage in natural resources, Canada can not only lead the world in sustainable development but also support long-term prosperity for Canadians.

Strategic Growth Enablers



Fix Canada's Major Project Approval Processes

Developing and exporting our abundance of natural resources is key to a thriving Canada. But our existing major project review systems do not support these goals.

Under the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA), projects of all types are mired in ever-expanding bureaucratic review and red tape, political interference, endless legal challenges, interprovincial squabbles, interdepartmental inefficiencies, and duplicative processes. Many natural resource project proponents do not want to build projects under this regulatory regime.

And that's just the project review process. If a project gets approved, the same list of problems happens all over again at the permitting stage.

The federal government has taken some steps to address these issues, but more needs to be done. We need a federal review system that is impartial, proportional, trusted, efficient, and predictable.

The IAA needs either replacement or significant reform. Adjustments are also needed to laws governing permitting and project reviews that don't meet the IAA thresholds. Most importantly, these changes need to last. No business will invest in a major project if review processes change every time the government does.

Recommendations:

- Explicitly signal that the federal government supports all major projects across natural resource value chains to be in the public interest—even before a project review begins.
- Limit federal assessments, by law and in spirit, to projects/issues in federal jurisdiction.
- Remove the ministerial power to unilaterally designate a project for federal review.
- Ensure final decisions in project reviews are made by an independent regulator, not by politicians at the end of a drawn-out process.
- Provide clarity from regulators on the scope of information required at each stage of a review—and ensure these boundaries are respected. Set maximum page and word counts to protect reasonability.
- Create review exclusions or simplified processes for projects that modify or expand existing operations.
- Focus assessments on project-specific, unique, and material risks—rather than low-risk activities with a proven history of successful mitigation. Adopt a trust-but-verify approach for low-risk activities.
- Advance reconciliation by empowering Indigenous Peoples in reviews. Remove barriers to full participation through funding to build technical capacity, and clarify the roles of government, proponents, and Indigenous Peoples at the outset of a review.
- Ensure strong leadership during reviews by designating a single lead agency. This agency should be the single point of contact for proponents and be responsible for keeping all other involved departments on track within their defined scope.
- Ensure a one-project, one-review approach by recognizing, aligning, or substituting federal reviews with provincial review processes as a preferred or primary approach.
- Demonstrate confidence in the review process by publicly championing approved projects.
- Adhere to and enforce the 5-year maximum project review and permitting timeline in the *Impact Assessment Act*.

Create a Clear and Effective Indigenous Consultation Process

Natural resource sector businesses recognize that meaningful Indigenous consultation is vital for advancing economic reconciliation and Indigenous participation in major project developments. Done well, Crown-Indigenous and proponent-Indigenous engagement creates investment certainty, protects rights, and produces prosperity for Indigenous- and non-Indigenous communities alike.

However, rather than making firm, accountable decisions on how it exercises its consultation duties within project reviews, the federal government has left these matters in limbo, deferring tough choices to the courts to avoid political risk. Its efforts have become inefficient, overlapping, slow, and of inconsistent quality between the departments involved.

The Crown's unclear process has increased an already uncertain business environment, making it more challenging for companies to navigate their Indigenous engagement efforts. While businesses have taken the lead in driving economic participation for Indigenous communities through project specific benefit agreements, the evolving legal landscape is increasingly blurring the distinction between their responsibilities and those of the Crown.

Ultimately, legal uncertainty deters investment, delays project reviews, and restricts economic opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. To attract and secure investment and promote shared prosperity, consultation must be transparent, consistent, and collaborative, with clearly defined responsibilities.

Recommendations:

- Clarify the Crown's process for fulfilling its duty to consult and accommodate within review and permitting processes, including how it will leverage relationships between Indigenous communities and project proponents. Clarification should align with the standards outlined in the Haida v. BC and Taku River Tlingit v. BC court decisions; and recent interpretations of free, prior and informed consent in the Kebaowek v. Canadian Nuclear decision.
- Clearly distinguish between the Crown's duty to consult and proponents' benefit-sharing negotiations, ensuring no government interference in benefit-sharing agreements.
- Create a centralized Indigenous Consultation Office to consolidate Crown-led consultation efforts in project reviews and permitting. It should serve as a direct liaison between the Crown and Indigenous communities, guaranteeing coordinated and consistent processes that meet its consultation obligations.
- Provide proponents with consultation guidance that includes:
    - common guidance by project type;
    - parameters of consultation requirements specified;
    - maps identifying which communities must be consulted given a project's location;
    - requirements scaled by proximity to Indigenous communities and impact severity
    - harmonized federal and provincial consultation requirements; and
    - protections from legal challenges resulting from the use of this guidance.
- Compensate proponents for losses from the Crown's failure to fulfill its duty to consult.
- Co-develop with Indigenous Peoples a clear and broadly-accepted definition and approach to free, prior, and informed consent.

Unlock Indigenous Economic Potential in the Resources Sector

Growth in the natural resources sector presents a unique opportunity to create prosperity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities through jobs, revenue, and, where appropriate, equity stakes in major projects.

Given their location, scale, and potential for shared ownership, major resource projects are uniquely positioned to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and advance long-term economic empowerment. Meaningful Indigenous inclusion will help ensure that traditional knowledge informs project design; safeguards lands, health and cultures; and enables participation in economic agreements that foster lasting prosperity.

Indigenous individuals are already well represented in oil and gas, mining, and forestry jobs, often earning above the national average. However, barriers such as limited access to capital, financing and capacity-building can hinder communities from securing equity stakes in these projects and prevent Indigenous-led businesses from fully benefiting from project development. Additionally, while Indigenous employment rates in the resources sector are strong, skills training opportunities can be lower in remote communities; and Indigenous representation in technical and leadership positions remains low, limiting influence in decision making and long-term prosperity.

This is a missed opportunity. Businesses have taken the lead in advancing Indigenous economic participation through negotiated benefit agreements, but more can be done. Governments must support access to capital and invest in Indigenous training and capacity-building. Indigenous governance and promoting collaborative decision-making will be essential to unlocking Canada's full economic potential in the resources sector.

Recommendations:

- Collaborate with industry to co-fund capacity training programs that enhance Indigenous expertise in project participation and the evaluation of project benefits and impacts.
- Establish benchmarks for organizations that deliver skills and training through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program to ensure high-quality training that enhances job opportunities, including greater access to leadership roles in the resources sector.
- Fund and expand programs that offer training, mentorship, and access to resources for Indigenous entrepreneurship.
- Partner with educational institutions to provide on-site skills training opportunities to Indigenous people in remote communities who face mobility barriers.
- Explore opportunities to expand programs that accelerate project developments and enable Indigenous participation and equity partnerships, like the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program and other programs. Ensure these initiatives are inclusive of energy developments.

Pursue New Global Markets for Resource Industries

Canada has prospered enormously from its trade relationship with the United States. However, the imposition of tariffs and the threat of further tariff escalation from the Trump Administration has exposed the downside of that trade dependence. While the US will remain a vital market and strategic priority for our resource exporters for the foreseeable future, Canada needs to improve its access to countries outside the US.

Fortunately, we have a good starting point. Canadian businesses benefit from a range of international free trade agreements that open up markets around the world.

The problem, however, is that a range of barriers limit the ability of resource exporters to reach those markets. The most significant of these are tied to Canada's domestic trade infrastructure and are addressed in the "Invest in trade-related transportation infrastructure" section, below.

But other obstacles need to be addressed as well. These include foreign regulatory and other non-tariff barriers, tense relations with major international markets, and the unfamiliarity that some exporters may have with markets outside the US. Some are unique to specific resource sectors and are discussed in the relevant sections, further below.

Meanwhile, we have an opportunity to use our resource wealth to support our international allies, contribute to global security, and gain international influence. All we need to do is seize the opportunities in front of us and say "yes" when countries come knocking at our door.

Recommendations:

- Explore new free trade agreements with countries that hold high growth potential for resource exports.
- Engage and advocate for a broader Asia-Pacific strategy for Canada's natural resources including investments in reliable transportation routes and supporting business relationships in Asia.
- Increase funding to support Export Development Canada's (EDC) risk capital and direct EDC to take more risk when making allocation decisions.
- Conduct a performance appraisal of Global Affairs' support programs for trade diversification. Use the learnings to develop more effective export assistance for small businesses and new exporters.
- Negotiate with trade partners to reduce or eliminate non-tariff barriers facing Canadian resource industries, as well as tariff escalation on value-added products.
- Prioritize over all other considerations requests from allied countries to supply strategic resources.

Invest in Trade-Related Transportation Infrastructure

Canada's resource industries cannot thrive without a domestic transportation network that allows them to reach international markets quickly, reliably and inexpensively, both now and in future.

Unfortunately, Canadians, businesses, and international customers all think our trade infrastructure network is in bad shape and rapidly deteriorating.

New infrastructure has not been built at the pace needed, causing bottlenecks that cascade from one mode of transportation to others. Limited pipeline capacity is forcing oil transportation onto alternative methods, creating challenges across resource industries. Reluctance to automate and modernize our ports is keeping costs high and efficiency low. And recent port and rail labour disruptions have called into question the reliability of our entire trade transportation network.

Simply put, Canada needs to prioritize developing a world-leading trade infrastructure network that puts economic interests above all other considerations.

Recommendations:

- Develop a long-term (25 year) plan to expand Canada's export infrastructure. Based on clear, objective economic criteria, and insulated from short-term electoral considerations, the plan should focus on nationally significant projects that enhance access to international markets, including exploring development of the Port of Churchill.
- Extend the National Trade Corridor Fund by at least 10 years (to 2037-38) and increase annual funding to meet infrastructure needs.
- Invest in innovation and automation to improve efficiency and reduce operating costs at Canada's major ports.
- Amend the labour code to make labour and service disruptions in Canada's critical economic infrastructure preventable, and ensure collaborative collective bargaining. In the event labour disruptions occur, prioritize the national economic interest over work stoppages.
- Work with rail carriers to deliver safe, efficient, reliable and cost-effective freight transportation that meets the needs of exporters and the Canadian economy, generally.
- Ensure that fees charged at Canadian ports are globally competitive.
- Establish clear decision-making guidelines for Canada's major ports. These guidelines should prioritize national economic objectives over all other concerns.
- Expedite the federal approval and permitting of all oil and gas pipelines and export terminals currently in the federal regulatory queue, in part to create more options for energy producers to ship their products.
- Work with provincial and municipal governments to ensure local interests do not frustrate infrastructure investment that advances national economic objectives.

Targeted Industry Solutions

Feeding Everyone:

Meeting the Challenges of Feeding a Growing World

Feeding Everyone: Meeting the Challenges of Feeding a Growing World

Canada is home to some of the most fertile farmland, productive ranches, and cutting-edge agri-tech innovations in the world. In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, the significance of a robust agricultural sector cannot be overstated; it plays a critical role in ensuring food security and national resilience.

This sector's incredible natural resources and human capital have long been a driver of Canada's economic growth, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Today, 1 in 9 jobs are in agriculture, and the sector provides millions of jobs and generates billions in economic activity feeding Canadians and the world.

But there's still work to do to ensure Canadian agriculture reaches its full potential.

Right now, Canadian farmers struggle to get their products to market while navigating burdensome federal regulations which add costs and paperwork. To top it off, the sector is undergoing a severe labour shortage. Young people aren't going into agriculture, the immigration system isn't suited for the unique needs of the industry and there's not enough investment in research and development to address the labour shortage through automation.

However, we can turn this around.

By addressing trade barriers, burdensome regulations, and labour shortages, Canada's agriculture industry can reach its full potential as a global agricultural leader.

Here's what Canada's next federal government can do to support a vibrant and growing agricultural sector:

- Make agriculture and value-added food production a top federal priority
- Improve market access for Canadian agricultural products
- Amend and improve the regulatory environment for agriculture
- Strengthen workforce capacity in agriculture

Make Agriculture and Value-added Food Production a Top Federal Priority

Canada's agriculture sector is a cornerstone of the national economy, contributing billions to GDP, and positioning Canada as a key player in global food security.

However, despite its vast economic and strategic significance, agriculture is underappreciated within the federal government. The Minister of Agriculture lacks the influence and prominence within Cabinet held by the Minister of Natural Resources and others; and agriculture ranks relatively low as a strategic economic priority when it comes to planning and policymaking.

Given the sector's growing global demand, its role in trade, and its vulnerability to issues such as supply chain disruptions, trade wars, emission abatement policies, and regulatory challenges, elevating the Minister of Agriculture to a more senior position within Cabinet is both logical and necessary. A stronger mandate would ensure agricultural priorities are better integrated into national economic planning, international trade negotiations, and infrastructure development.

By granting the agriculture portfolio a level of influence and prominence at least equal to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Canada can enhance its global competitiveness, secure long-term food production capacity, and drive economic growth, reinforcing the industry's role as a pillar of national prosperity.

It's also time to prioritize investment in agriculture, particularly in value-added activity, to enhance the value of our products and enhance our food security. This means that Canada should encourage more agricultural processing right here at home, rather than shipping off our products to be processed elsewhere. Doing this would further boost Canada's global competitive edge.

Recommendations:

- Publicly signal that agriculture is one of Canada's most strategically important industries and make it a priority growth area for federal economic policy.
- Elevate the importance of the federal Minister of Agriculture within Cabinet, and improve coordination between the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources to advance the agriculture sector.
- Prior to the development of regulation, ensure economic analysis is done to determine the impact on the agricultural sector, specifically how it will impact competitiveness in terms of price and reliability.
- Provide a tax credit to businesses who invest in projects to build or expand value-added agri-processing facilities in Canada. Ensure that any such tax credit is additive and complementary to any existing provincial incentives.
- Improve digital infrastructure to support precision agriculture and enhance rural connectivity.
- Repeal the sections of the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* that establish the consumer carbon tax.

Improve Market Access for Canadian Agricultural Products

As the global population continues to grow, so does the need for reliable and nutritious food sources. With growing markets in Asia, Europe, and beyond, Canadian agriculture is in a prime position to meet this demand. We are a safe, trustworthy provider, with significant capacity to expand.

But to do so, Canadian agriculture producers need to get their products to market quickly, reliably and cost-effectively. An earlier section of this report outlined a series of issues and recommendations to improve the cost, reliability and efficiency of Canada's trade-related transportation infrastructure. However, there are other, more specific, needs within agriculture that must be addressed for the sector to realize its global potential. It is imperative that the next Government of Canada align its efforts with those of the agricultural community to foster an economy that benefits all Canadians.

On top of infrastructure concerns, agri-food producers continue to face market access barriers abroad. Bans on GMO products in some countries, the threat of new US country-of-origin labeling requirements, issues related to disease control, and other barriers limit our growth potential. Meanwhile, Canada's insistence on defending supply management in trade negotiations often results in trade concessions that restrict other, more export-oriented Canadian producers.

Recommendations:

- Finalize and ratify zoning agreements with other countries to effectively manage FAD (Foreign Animal Disease) outbreaks as the agreements facilitate a mechanism for earlier reopening of exports lessening the impact to industry.
- Direct the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) to introduce funding programs or financial resources specifically allocated for agricultural infrastructure projects.
- Use Farm Credit Canada (FCC) dividends for agriculture-related infrastructure projects rather than directing it to general government revenues (In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, FCC paid a dividend of $690 million to the Government of Canada).
- Expand access to global markets by negotiating partial free trade agreements that focus solely on eliminating tariffs and other trade barriers for agricultural goods. These agreements could be finalized in the early stages of more comprehensive free trade negotiations, or stand on their own.
- Oppose the reintroduction of Mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (M-COOL) in the United States.
- Reform the framework of supply management through industry consultation to better align with current market dynamics.
- Include more agricultural related products, such fertilizer, in exemptions from work stoppages, as grain currently receives.
- Resist pressure to re-introduce legislation like *Bill C-282* which sought to prohibit Canada from negotiating concessions on supply management in future trade agreements.

Amend and Improve the Regulatory Environment for Agriculture

A strong and efficient agricultural sector is fundamental to Canada's food security, economic stability, and rural livelihoods. However, achieving this requires a functional, stable, and supportive regulatory framework. Right now, the regulatory system is holding the industry back.

The agri-food industry operates within a complex, multi-stage supply chain that intersects multiple government departments, often leading to fragmented oversight and regulatory bottlenecks. Outdated compliance measures create unnecessary burdens, while a lack of coordination results in inefficiencies that hinder sector growth.

Additionally, overly restrictive and unpredictable pesticide regulations not only stifle sector innovation but also limit farmers' ability to manage pests effectively. These regulatory and financial pressures create an environment of uncertainty, undermining the sector's ability to compete, expand, and drive innovation in an increasingly demanding global economy. Addressing these challenges through targeted reforms will strengthen Canada's agricultural sector, improve competitiveness, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Recommendations:

- Improve the responsiveness of the Canada Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Specifically, work with labour representatives to increase the available hours of CFIA inspectors during peak times.
- Allow electronic signatures for Health Certificate endorsements of live animal exports.
- Do not create package labeling requirements without the involvement of industry stakeholders to ensure practicality and transparency.
- Implement regulatory practices, with a focus on regulatory certainty, to make Canada a more attractive market for registering and innovating new all agronomic tools, including seed, fertilizers, pest control products, etc.
- Require a thorough assessment of suitable alternatives before canceling or amending pesticide product registrations.
- Invest in internal workforce development at Health Canada to ensure that sufficient capacity is in place to make regulatory decisions in an informed and expedited manner. Institute specific timelines at each stage of the regulatory process to improve responsiveness to industry advancements.
- In cooperation and consultation with private industry, revise and modernize the suite of Business Risk Management programs (e.g. AgriStability, AgriInvest, and AgriInsurance) to address regional and industry-specific issues and goals.
- Strengthen intellectual property protections to encourage investment in Canadian-developed agricultural innovations.
- Work with provincial governments to create guidelines ensuring that local municipalities cannot stop a project that has received provincial and/or federal approvals.
- Express confidence in regulatory processes by publicly defending and championing agriculture and agri-food innovations that receive government approvals.
- Ensure the 30% emissions reductions from fertilizer target remains voluntary.

Strengthen Workforce Capacity in Agriculture

Businesses across Canada's agriculture sector are facing growing challenges in recruiting and retaining both skilled and unskilled workers. Too few young people are entering post-secondary programs in agriculture, and permanent immigration streams are not filling the gap. And the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, which many agri-food businesses rely on, is facing an uncertain future.

According to the 2023 Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council Employer Survey, 44% of employers were unable to find the workers they needed. And the problem is only expected to get worse; a 2019 RBC report projected that the number of unfilled agricultural jobs will rise from 63,000 in 2017 to 123,000 by 2029, highlighting a widening labour gap.

This issue is further exacerbated by the rapid technological transformation within the industry, particularly the rise of precision agriculture, which demands a new and evolving skill set that many workers are not yet trained to meet. Building an agriculture workforce for today and into the future is paramount to preserving the economic benefits this sector provides.

At the same time, Canada isn't investing enough in the research and development that could help reduce the need for manual labour in agriculture. Sophisticated new machinery and equipment have the potential to transform and automate many farming activities, making it less dependent on labour. Other countries are already investing heavily in agri-tech, giving their farmers a competitive edge, while Canada risks falling behind.

Recommendations:

- Preserve and streamline the ability of the agriculture industry to utilize the TFW program.
- Enhance the International Experience Canada (IEC) program by increasing the age range of those eligible and increasing the length of the exchange.
- Give provincial governments the ability to meet their unique rural labour market needs by setting Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) targets back to around 40% of economic immigration for 2025–2027. Also, examine opportunities to strengthen their ties to a regional economy.
- Work with the provinces and post-secondary institutes to support employment placement programs, and training that encourage interest in agriculture careers including the development of a Journeyman Farmer Course.
- Persuade universities to break down silos between faculties while highlighting agriculture in STEM programs more.
- Introduce a system of tax credits to encourage the private sector to invest more in agricultural innovation and automation. These credits should be available for the whole supply chain from farm to finished product.

Sustaining Canada's Forests:

A Path to Economic Growth and Environmental Stewardship

Sustaining Canada's Forests: A Path to Economic Growth and Environmental Stewardship

Canada is home to one of the world's largest and most sustainably managed forest reserves. As the fourth-largest exporter of forest products, the industry generated $45.6 billion in export revenue and supported over 212,000 jobs. Key products include softwood lumber ($13.7 billion), wood pulp ($8.9 billion), and structural wood panels ($4.7 billion)—important inputs to home building and construction across North America and beyond.

Beyond its economic impact, forestry is integral to Indigenous and rural communities, providing employment and investment while maintaining a strong commitment to sustainability.

But Canada's forestry sector is increasingly struggling to remain competitive. Barries to trade, high operating costs, regulatory complexity and climate-related risks have slowed investment and industry growth. While countries like Sweden and Finland have strengthened their forestry industries through competitive policy frameworks, Canada has hindered investment. Without a shift toward policies that foster growth, investment, and expansion into new markets, the industry risks further mill closures, job losses, and reduced economic activity, particularly in rural communities.

What's more, overlapping federal and provincial regulations have created inefficiencies, driving up costs and creating uncertainty for businesses. Trade disputes, particularly with the US, further threaten the industry's stability, making diversification into new markets critical for long-term resilience.

Despite these challenges, Canada remains a global leader in sustainable forestry. However, maintaining this leadership will require a more competitive policy environment that attracts investment, expands trade, and improves market access.

While provinces oversee most aspects of forestry management, the federal government has a critical role to play in supporting the industry's long-term growth. Strategic action is needed in key areas such as trade advocacy, investment incentives, and forestry health. Action is also needed in reducing federal policy barriers, including excessive emissions pricing, regulatory inefficiencies, and limited international market access.

Here's what Canada's next federal government can do to position Canada as a global leader in forestry:

- Promote healthy and productive forests
- Strengthen Canada's fiscal and investment climate
- Modernize regulations
- Strengthen trade and market access

Promote Healthy and Productive Forests

While Canada is home to one of the world's largest and most sustainably managed forest reserves, growing threats such as wildfires, climate change, and forest health decline are testing the resilience of these ecosystems. Sustainable management practices, including reforestation, wildfire mitigation, and adaptive policies, are essential to maintaining the long-term health of Canada's forests and ensuring they continue to support communities, biodiversity, and the economy.

While Canada has historically been recognized for its world-class forestry practices, our approach to forest management remains largely reactive rather than proactive. In contrast, countries like Sweden and Finland have adopted more sustainable forestry strategies focused on prevention, risk reduction, and long-term resource stewardship.

To secure the future of Canada's forests, a more strategic and coordinated approach is needed. The federal government can play a key role by complementing provincial efforts in forest health and wildfire prevention, adopting proven best practices from Sweden and Finland, and supporting Indigenous-led forest management initiatives.

Recommendations:

- Expand investments to support provincial efforts in forest health to reduce wildfire risk.
- Leverage the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) to promote sustainable forest management practices modeled on successful approaches in Sweden and Finland including:
    - Implementing early and commercial thinning to support tree growth, reduce wildfire risk, and enhance local fiber supply.
    - Utilizing residual forest product waste management practices to improve sustainability and repurpose biomass for clean energy production.
    - Adopting disease prevention and pest management strategies to protect forest health.
- Support Indigenous-led forest management initiatives to advance both economic development and reconciliation efforts.

Strengthen Canada's Investment Climate

Federal carbon pricing policies impose significant financial strain on forestry operations, undermining the sector's competitiveness without meaningfully reducing global emissions. Coupled with an increasingly complex web of "command-and-control" regulations, these policies discourage investment—especially when compared to other jurisdictions that better balance sustainability with industry growth.

A more effective approach is needed—one that recognizes the forestry sector's dual role in economic development and environmental stewardship. Canada must adopt emissions management policies that contribute to *global* emissions reduction while ensuring the industry's long-term viability. This requires a strategy that prioritizes innovation, efficiency, and market-based mechanisms, ensuring Canadian forestry remains competitive while advancing sustainability goals.

Recommendations:

- Expand Clean Technology and Clean Electricity Investment Tax Credits (ITC), and other tax credits, to explicitly include:
    - Biomass energy production from forestry waste.
    - Pulp and paper modernization, wildfire mitigation, and forest product manufacturing and processing facilities in rural communities.
- Ensure federal and provincial tax credits are stackable, rather than mutually exclusive, to enhance investment incentives.
- Offer Export Development Canada loans at below market rates, secured by the $10 billion in accumulated softwood lumber duty deposits, to help companies sustain liquidity. These loans could include a countercyclical feature to support forestry companies during economic downturns.

Modernize Regulations

The forestry sector operates within an increasingly complex regulatory landscape, where overlapping provincial and federal frameworks fail to recognize the industry's leadership in sustainable forest management.

Conservation policies such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (30 by 30) and old-growth forests protections restrict access to timber supplies without fully considering economic implications. Likewise, the *Species at Risk Act (SARA), Fisheries Act*, and Migratory Birds Regulations impose additional restrictions that drive up costs and cause delays. Rather than acknowledging the sector's strong environmental standards and its production of low-emission-intensive materials, existing legislation—including commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP)— deters investment and economic growth. Additionally, many federal regulations duplicate existing provincial requirements, adding unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

To foster a more efficient and predictable policy environment, federal oversight of permitting, environmental approvals, and species protection must be better aligned with provincial regulations. Improved coordination will reduce inefficiencies, prevent conflicting mandates, and support both economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Recommendations:

- Support provinces in achieving meaningful revenue sharing with First Nations to help unlock access to sustainably managed timber resources.
- Improve forestry-related regulations under the *Species at Risk Act* including:
    - Updating recovery strategies for boreal and southern mountain caribou to reduce delays affecting forestry operations.
    - In collaboration with provinces, developing regionalized species recovery planning to allow provinces to implement tailored conservation measures.
- Streamline permitting under the *Fisheries Act* including:
    - Finalizing interim Codes of Practice for forestry-related activities that expedite low risk activities like culvert installation and water intake maintenance.
    - Developing a Prescribed Works and Waters Regulation to clarify project approvals and reduce administrative delays.
- Refine Migratory Birds Regulations including:
    - Implementing a clear permitting system that acknowledges responsible forestry management practices.
    - Aligning regulations with industry best practices to balance conservation with economic activity.

Strengthen Trade and Market Access

Canada's forestry sector faces a "triple threat" of escalating trade challenges that, if left unaddressed, will severely undermine its competitiveness. In addition to broad-based US tariffs aimed at reshoring domestic industry, the US administration's Section 232 national security review of Canadian forestry products increases the risk of additional punitive tariffs. This comes on top of rising duties on softwood lumber, which have already reached 14.4% and are expected to climb as high as 40% later this year.

As trade barriers increase, securing diversified and reliable market access must be a core federal priority. Canada must urgently reduce its reliance on a single trading partner. Western Canada, as the Asia-Pacific gateway, has a strategic opportunity—if exports cannot move south due to tariffs and trade restrictions, the most viable alternative is expanding trade westward to the Asia-Pacific.

Earlier, this paper presented a series of overarching recommendations aimed at accessing new markets and improving domestic trade infrastructure for all Canadian resource industries.

However, there are additional, more targeted, steps that can be taken to support the forestry sector expanding into new markets and finding new buyers. Chief among them should be reprioritizing Asia-Pacific trade expansion, especially outside of China and India where international relations remain strained.

Recommendations:

- As part of developing a broader plan to mitigate softwood lumber duty issues, clearly communicate that Canada does not subsidize our lumber.
- Restore Natural Resources of Canada (NRCAN) funding of forestry trade offices to market Canadian forestry products abroad.
- Building on the success of the forest sector to open Asian markets in the past, prioritize global trade missions to diversify Canada's forestry markets beyond the US.

Fueling Canada’s Future:

Unlocking the Full Potential of Our Energy Resources

Fueling Canada's Future: Unlocking the Full Potential of our Energy Resources

Canada is endowed with the third-largest oil and fifth-largest natural gas reserves in the world. These prolific resources have provided hundreds of thousands of high-paying jobs, billions of dollars in government revenues and helped to advance important economic and social goals, notably Indigenous economic reconciliation.

But for too long, Canada hasn't allowed its oil and gas sector to realize its full potential.

Mired by burdensome regulation and uncertain or outright hostile policy and incursions on provincial jurisdiction, federal policy has kneecapped Canada's ability to produce and transport crude oil and natural gas to global markets quickly and competitively. These failures have weakened Canada's economy by driving away investment, lowering wages, killing jobs, and making life more expensive.

What's more, Canada has failed to recognize the strategic significance of its energy resources in safeguarding national sovereignty and strengthening our global influence. Geopolitical dynamics have shifted under our feet, but Canada's approach to developing oil and gas didn't adjust. Instead, Canada has rejected our allies' requests for access to our energy resources. Countries like Germany and Japan, eager to buy what Canada could provide, have been forced to find supply elsewhere.

In the quest to meet its Paris Agreement commitments, Canada has compromised domestic growth and international influence, only to see our foregone greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions replaced by other nations.

Meanwhile, faced with tariffs imposed by the United States, Canadians are confronted with the risks of over-reliance on a single trading partner, as well as our dependence on the US for energy security in eastern Canada.

Fortunately, attitudes are shifting. An unprecedented 80% of Canadians now support sea-to-sea pipelines in a bid to reduce Canada's reliance on trade with the US. We have a window of opportunity to correct the policy mistakes of the last 15 years by supporting the full development of Canada's oil and gas value chain. This includes ensuring more efficient transportation infrastructure and enabling all of Canada's valuable resource products to reach international markets.

It's time to reaffirm Canada's sovereignty by harnessing the potential of our collective resource wealth and becoming the responsible, sustainable energy powerhouse we ought to be.

Here's what Canada's next federal government can do to help create a national energy powerhouse:

- Stand up for Canada's energy sector and support its growth
- Create a simple, competitive, and globally focused industrial emissions policy
- Retract and repeal investment-killing layers of regulatory policy

Stand up for Canada's Energy Sector and Support its Growth

Canada has all the essentials to grow its oil and gas industry. We sit atop some of the world's most valuable reserves. We have a highly skilled workforce. We have strong international demand from willing buyers. And we have a stable, democratic system of government.

But for much of the past ten years, the federal government has been openly hostile to oil and gas development. Major pipelines were cancelled. Oil tankers banned. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects rejected. And greenfield production growth denied.

As a result, Canada missed countless opportunities to diversify trade partnerships, improve resource transportation to tidewater, protect against tariffs, and strengthen its position as a key trade partner for its allies. Our hostile federal policy environment has made major private sector investments too risky without government guarantees.

It didn't have to be this way, and we can still do something about it.

To reverse course, the federal government must clearly and unambiguously communicate its support for responsibly developing Canada's oil and gas resources. With a federal government that champions the sector, investors will have the positive signal they need to invest again. And as the sector grows, Canada can fully realize its strategic importance in securing our economic wellbeing and sovereignty—and reap the prosperity this generates.

Recommendations:

- Announce immediately upon taking office that Canada will allow and support oil and gas production to grow unhindered by any restrictive government policies.
- Release a Cabinet Directive upon forming government that instructs the ministers responsible for energy development to immediately accelerate the approval of oil and gas pipelines, liquefaction facilities, and related infrastructure at key port locations.
- In the national interest, accelerate the approval and permitting of all oil and gas pipelines, upstream production, and export terminals that are in the federal regulatory queue.
- Launch an industry-aligned public education campaign to increase awareness of the strategic importance of Canada's oil and gas resources. This campaign must help reset the public narrative about the industry, emphasizing the strategic role of oil and gas in economic growth, and in global and domestic energy security and stability.
- Develop a loan guarantee program in collaboration with industry to de-risk private sector capital deployment and enable major project development.

Create a Simple, Competitive, and Globally Focused Industrial Emissions Policy

Canada should be recognized globally as a reliable and responsible supplier of oil and gas. When our allies seek resources to strengthen their own energy security, we should be ready to deliver reliable supply while upholding high environmental standards.

In support of these two goals, the federal government established an industrial carbon pricing backstop designed to reduce emissions while maintaining industry competitiveness.

But, impatient with the pace of GHG reductions from this policy, it introduced layer upon layer of uncompetitive and complex emissions policy, hamstringing the industry's growth potential and driving away investment.

Moreover, Canada has become so fixated on reducing GHGs at home that it lost sight of the broader goal: reducing global emissions. As a result, major investments, particularly in LNG facilities, have gone to countries other than Canada. We lose out on the economic benefits without any meaningful reduction in global emissions.

To change direction, Canada needs to adjust the approach of its industrial carbon pricing system; accelerate investments to reduce emissions at home; support projects that reduce global emissions; and ensure all emissions reduction policies keep the global competitiveness of our oil and gas industry top-of-mind.

Recommendations:

- Work with provinces to prioritize a reliable, predictable output-based pricing system (OBPS) over other industrial GHG management regulations. The pricing approach should provide a clear, long-term behavioral signal and industry competitiveness mechanisms with sufficient time for businesses to adjust.
- Adjust the current federal Output-Based Pricing System (OBPS) according to competitiveness and national interest lenses. The federal backstop must: **(1)** ensure emissions-intensive, trade exposed (EITE) industries are globally competitive, particularly with the US; **(2)** ensure consistency across every province on EITE industry competitiveness as well as on policy stringency; **(3)** recognize the sector's strategic geopolitical importance in advancing Canada's national, continental, and global energy security goals; and in protecting our sovereignty; and **(4)** defer to provincial regulatory authority.
- Support LNG development, emphasizing the emissions displacement effect of LNG replacing coal; and of Canada's lower-emitting LNG production relative to other sources.
- Accelerate the development of carbon capture, utilization and storage by ensuring projects tied to enhanced oil recovery qualify for the full CCUS Investment Tax Credit.
- Increase the available funding for a broad-based carbon contracts for difference (CCfD) program capable of guaranteeing the long-term value of emissions performance credits and reducing the operational costs imposed by CCUS projects.
- Work with industry to adjust the updated federal methane regulations. Ensure provinces have jurisdiction to create more feasible, cost-effective regulations through broader flexibility provisions and performance-based standards.

Retract and Repeal Investment-Killing Layers of Regulatory Policy

Growth in the oil and gas industry is vital for the economic well-being of Canadians, for continued investment in innovative clean technologies, and for advancing Canada's strategic geopolitical interests.

At the same time, Canada has a responsibility to develop its resources as cleanly as possible. However, federal policy has not appropriately balanced these objectives.

It has swung too far against responsible *development* by introducing a web of consequential and complex policies that have stifled the investments needed to accomplish any of these growth objectives. Just as one policy is being developed or enacted, another is proposed.

For the average Canadian, this lost investment means a higher cost of living, job losses, and lower government tax revenues for the public services they rely on.

As outlined in the "Create a simple, competitive, globally focused industrial emissions policy" section above, meaningful industrial GHG reductions should be accomplished through a reliable, predictable output-based pricing system that ensures industry competitiveness and defers to provincial jurisdiction over emissions management. A well-balanced pricing system eliminates the need to add layers of complex, investment-deterring climate policies on top.

These policies must be peeled back to encourage oil and gas industry investment and growth—including investments in innovative clean technologies.

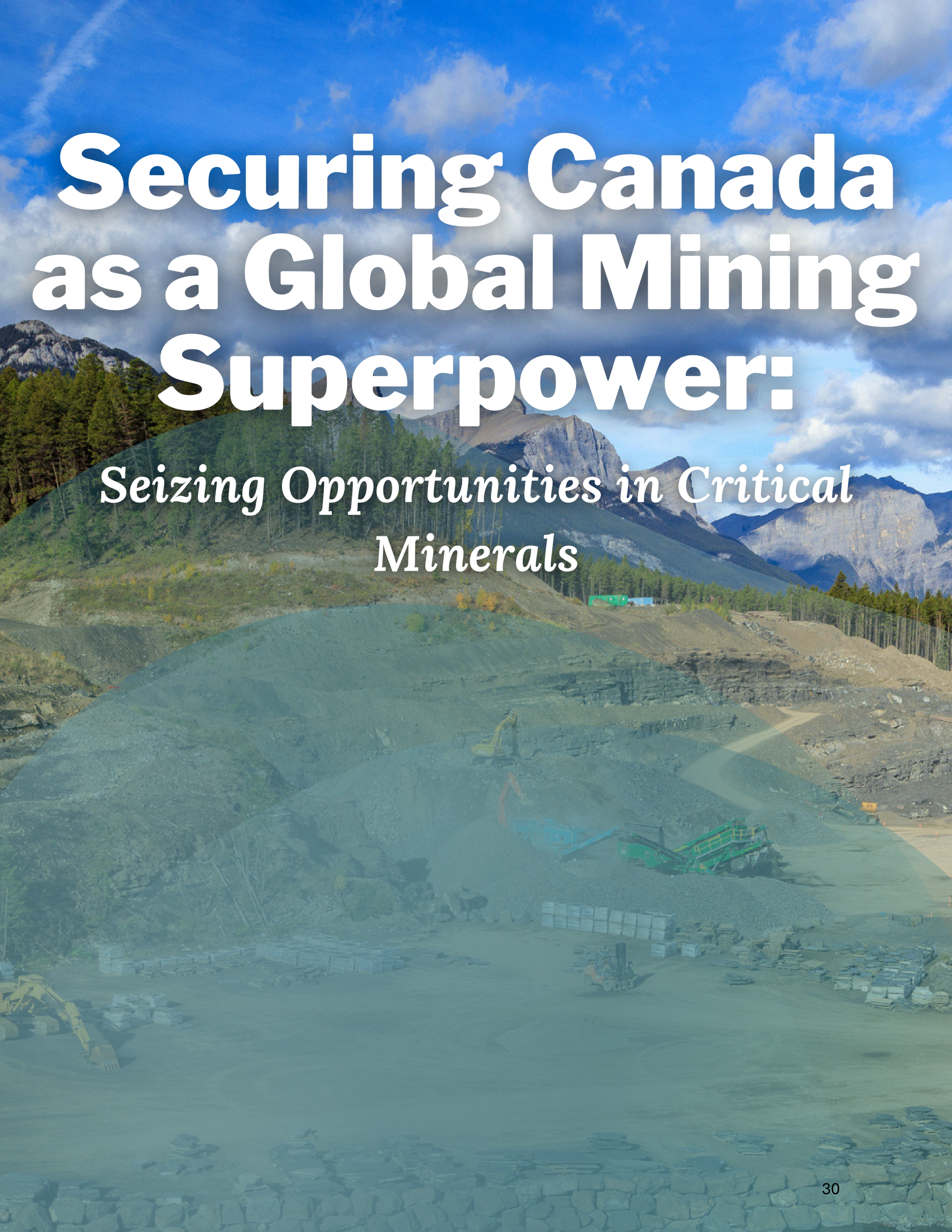
To avoid these problems and to increase the competitiveness of its oil and gas industry, Canada will need to retract or repeal the policies that stand in the way.

Recommendations:

- Rescind the greenwashing provisions added to the *Competition Act* in 2024 through Bill C-59.
- Withdraw the Clean Electricity Regulations at its earliest opportunity.
- Abandon plans to implement the Oil and Gas Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions Cap.
- Repeal the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*.

Securing Canada as a Global Mining Superpower:

Seizing Opportunities in Critical Minerals



Securing Canada as a Global Mining Superpower: Seizing Opportunities in Critical Minerals

Canada is home to some of the world's most abundant mineral reserves, including critical minerals essential for the clean energy, technology, and defense industries. These resources have the potential to drive economic growth, create high-paying jobs, and position Canada as a global leader in the supply of materials crucial to the modern economy. Mining also has a significant opportunity in advancing Indigenous economic reconciliation, providing opportunities for partnerships and long-term prosperity.

Western Canada plays a leading role in the global production of essential critical minerals, demand for which is only increasing. Yet, Canada's mining sector remains mired in regulatory red tape, slow permitting processes, and policies that discourage investment. Instead of capitalizing on our vast mineral wealth, we have allowed excessive bureaucracy and uncertainty to stall new projects, forcing companies to look elsewhere. As a result, Canada has fallen behind in the global competition for securing and processing the critical minerals needed for everything from electric vehicles to national security.

While demand for Canada's mineral resources surges, our failure to streamline development has left us reliant on geopolitical rivals for supply, undermining our economic and strategic interests. Meanwhile, our allies—who seek stable, responsible sources of minerals—are turning to nations with weaker environmental and labour standards to meet their needs.

Now, with growing recognition of the sector's importance, there is a rare opportunity to course-correct. By cutting red tape, accelerating permitting, and fostering investment, Canada can reclaim its place as a mining powerhouse, secure its economic future, and strengthen its role in the global supply chain.

Here's what Canada's next federal government can do to secure Canada as a global mining superpower:

- Foster an environment of investment and competitiveness
- Enhance Canadian mining capacity
- Tackle Canada's mining labour shortage

Foster an Environment of Investment and Competitiveness

Canada boasts a significant advantage with its thirty-four critical minerals, a skilled workforce, a progressive approach to economic reconciliation, and a strong commitment to environmental, social, and governance standards in mining. However, despite these strengths, we face challenges that undermine our ability to fully realize our potential for economic investment and competitiveness. Complicated and multi-layered tax structures and lack of incentive tax credits diminish Canada's competitiveness, steering investments toward regions with more favourable conditions.

To enhance Canada's standing as a leader in this sector, we must find a balance between responsible, sustainable mining practices and fostering a competitive investment environment.

Recommendations:

- Implement the Clean Economy Investment Tax Credits and strategic funds for promoting investment in critical minerals and clean technology.
- Introduce and pass the proposed amendments to the Clean Technology Manufacturing ITC to expand the eligibility for tax credits to other relevant activities (e.g., properties involved in polymetallic mining and those involved in certain recycling processes).
- Ensure industrial emissions pricing is designed to assist mines in further investing in decarbonization projects.
- Introduce tax credits for companies that develop shared-used infrastructure, such as multi-user roads and electricity grids that support multiple mining operations.
- Create a phased-in approach for companies to gradually meet sustainability standards, differentiating expectations for large and small mining firms to prevent undue financial strain on junior companies.
- Follow the European example and create a criteria-based Loan Security Program that offers project financing debt security of up to 80% of the project capital for a commercial facility.
- Communicate and market to the world that Canada is a proud and responsible mineral producer and that we are ready to do business.

Enhance Canadian Mining Capacity

Canada has the potential and resources to become a leading superpower in mining. However, outdated regulatory frameworks and restrictive policies are hindering the industry's ability to increase production responsibly. To meet the growing global demand for critical minerals, modernizing these regulations is essential to create opportunities for the industry to expand. The potential for increased investment and innovation is significant. With the right approach, Canada can confidently position itself in global markets as a proud and responsible producer of minerals.

Recommendations:

- Adjust greenhouse gas emissions targets and policies to better accommodate mines that do not have access to electricity grids.
- Expand access to Crown land for responsible mineral exploration through streamlined land-use policies and improved land tenure security.
- Designate specific high-potential mineral regions with pre-approved exploration criteria, reducing red tape for responsible companies.
- Accelerate responsible permitting and licensing for trusted companies with a proven track record and who voluntarily comply with sustainability standards, such as the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) initiative or the Copper Mark certification.
- Expand the list of prioritized critical minerals to include all identified critical minerals and increase the pool of resources able to access federal programming.
- Broaden the perimeter of the Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund (CMIF) to include northern parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan to incentivize investment in transportation and trade infrastructure.
- Explore the possibility of scaling up production of critical minerals as an avenue to meet Canada's NATO defence spending commitments.

Tackle Canada's Mining Labour Shortage

Canada is facing a significant challenge with a tight mining labour market, where the supply of workers is not keeping pace with demand. Although Canada promotes its critical minerals as valuable assets, these resources cannot be utilized without a skilled workforce to extract, transport, and process them.

There is a notable shortage of skilled labour in Canada, particularly in essential trades such as millwrights, heavy-duty mechanics, electricians, and mine operators. A large portion of the current workforce is nearing retirement, and there are not enough younger workers entering the industry to replace them. As the mining sector looks to expand and develop new projects, having a qualified domestic workforce will be crucial to support this growth.

Additionally, it is vital to have adequate infrastructure and resources in areas where mining projects are located. This ensures that the workforce can maintain a healthy lifestyle alongside their families, with access to essential services such as housing, childcare/schools, and grocery stores.

Recommendations:

- Implement initiatives to attract younger workers to the mining industry, such as promoting mining careers in schools and offering scholarships for mining-related programs.
- Improve coordination between the federal government, provinces/territories, industry, and educational institutions to align workforce planning and address regional labour gaps.
- Harmonize certificate/credential recognition across jurisdictions to allow for easier labour mobility to in-demand regions.
- Partner with educational institutions to provide on-site skills training opportunities to Indigenous people in remote communities who face mobility barriers.
- Enhance efforts to attract underrepresented groups by supporting businesses' efforts to create inclusive workplace environments and offer targeted recruitment programs.
- Invest in training programs to upskill and reskill the current workforce, focusing on new technologies and automation to ensure workers can adapt to evolving industry needs.
- Explore innovative approaches to housing and community infrastructure to support the influx of workers required for major mining projects, particularly in remote or northern regions.

Positioning Canada as a Global Aquaculture Leader:

Ensuring Growth and Sustainability

Positioning Canada as a Global Aquaculture Leader: Ensuring Growth and Sustainability

Canada's aquaculture sector—which includes the farming of more than a dozen types of fish and shellfish (much of that Atlantic salmon)—is vital to the economy, food security, and coastal communities. In 2023, it generated $2 billion in GDP, $900 million in exports, and supported 17,000 full-time jobs. The industry's supply chain of over 3,000 businesses benefits small, remote, and Indigenous communities.

With one of the lowest carbon footprints among protein sources, aquaculture is also well-positioned to meet growing global demand for food. Its efficient 1:1 feed-to-growth ratio outperforms beef, pork, and poultry.

Despite these advantages, regulatory challenges in Canada are stifling growth. In recent decades, activism has overshadowed science, and regulatory authority has increasingly shifted from the provincial to the federal government. On top of that, outdated marine harbour infrastructure and inadequate support for research and innovation are further limiting the industry's growth.

Meanwhile, as Canada restricts growth and deters investment, the global industry is growing dramatically to meet demand for high-quality protein. To capture those opportunities, the federal government must shift its policy environment to foster investment, create jobs, and secure Canada's role as a trusted global food supplier.

Modernize the Regulatory and Policy Environment

Securing Canada's role as a trusted global food supplier starts with a better regulatory landscape. Perhaps the biggest opportunity here is simply to remove or amend the regulations that harm the industry currently.

Some environment regulations offer little benefit while severely restricting industry growth. For example, despite research confirming that salmon farming is not responsible for the decline of wild salmon populations, activism continues to shape federal policy. Most recently, the government banned new salmon farming licenses on the West Coast, requiring farms to adopt unproven closed-containment technology by 2029—a decision that could cost 4,500 jobs and $1.17 billion in economic activity, with particularly severe consequences for coastal and Indigenous communities. And that's just one regulation.

But there are opportunities beyond regulation to position the industry for growth. From adopting developmental R&D licenses to drive innovation, to supporting Indigenous-led stewardship initiatives, there are a number of ways to support the industry's long-term growth.

Recommendations

- Reverse the federal ban on marine net-pen salmon farming, while supporting industry-led innovations to minimise interactions between farm-raised and wild salmon.
- Amend the *Fisheries Act* to allow for licences longer than 9 years. Short-term licenses discourage investment and innovation because they are shorter than the investment payback period for many assets (e.g., marine vessels). Licenses should be issued for the maximum term and be secure so long as the holder is in compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Establish developmental (R&D) licences, like the Norwegian model, to support the implementation and trialling of innovations and new technologies. Licenses should be of up to 15 years duration to allow for multiple production cycles. Successful R&D projects should also be convertible to ordinary licenses at a fixed price.
- Support the First Nations for Finfish Stewardship proposal for an Indigenous Aquaculture Governance Table (IAGT) and the Indigenous Centre for Aquatic Health Sciences (iCAHS) to foster Indigenous-led stewardship, research, and marine management.
- Increase federal funding for marine harbour infrastructure on the west coast, ensuring that it is on par with funding for east coast harbour infrastructure.

Authors & Contributors

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