

359 scientists support student demonstrations for climate action

As scientists and academics, we express our support for students taking part in the March 15 demonstration for the climate. Their desire to alert the public to the urgent need for action to combat climate change is not merely legitimate, but necessary. The alarms we have raised so far have clearly been insufficient, and the young generation will suffer the consequences of our failure to act.

The scientific consensus is unequivocal: without rapid, radical changes, we face climate change impacts that will be catastrophic for humanity and life on Earth.

Contrary to what some believe, the science is clear that Québec and Canada will not be left unscathed by the serious consequences of climate change. Recent extreme events give a taste of what the future will bring if current inaction continues. Every region has been affected in some manner: deadly heatwaves, droughts, extreme variations in rainfall and bitter cold, floods, and ravaged coastlines. These phenomena pose an extreme risk our health and safety, our agricultural land, our fisheries, our forests and the environment that we depend on.

These events alone should be enough to send a wake-up call to our governments and economic decision-makers. Clearly, however, the alarm bells must ring even louder: pressure from citizens must increase.

We understand that our young people find it increasingly difficult to carry on studying as though nothing has changed. It is our responsibility to support them in condemning the absence of political and economic leadership that we are witnessing. We must work together to research and implement solutions that will guarantee a sustainable economy in a viable world.

In view of the urgency of the situation and of the failure of our political and economic leaders to act, we support the students' demands for legislative action and the implementation of concrete measures to bring about a necessary transformation of our economy, beginning with a just energy transition that will make better use of our knowledge, our common resources and our renewable energy capacity.

We have added our names to this call because we believe that it is still possible to find a better path forward. All jurisdictions in the world, including Québec and Canada, must move from words to action in response to the scientific evidence and the demands of common sense. To restrict global warming to 1.5 °C, world emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) must be reduced by close to 50% by 2030. Net GHG emissions must fall to zero by 2050.

Time is short and the task is immense. But here in Québec and Canada, we have everything we need to be at the forefront of the great transition that must take place on both human and material levels. The social changes required will lead to a better quality of life in a healthier environment. There is no excuse for further delay.

In solidarity, we stand behind our young people in their call for action to protect the climate and the environmental systems which we all depend on. Our choices today will shape our collective future.