



Tel: 604-273-5722 | Fax: 604-273-5762 | Toll Free: 1-866-273-5766 | Toll Free Fax: 1-866-273-5762  
105 - 21900 Westminster Hwy., Richmond, BC V6V 0A8  
info@apbc.ca | www.apbc.ca

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Dear Members,

## Re: Heat Wave and Lytton Fire

In the aftermath of the recent extreme heat wave and the fire that destroyed the village of Lytton, the APBC Environment and Climate Change Committee (ECCC) would like to make a statement.

We would like to start by saying our thoughts are with those that have been devastated by the recent destruction in Lytton. We are also proud of all of our members who endured what was likely some of the most challenging work conditions of our careers. We recognize this experience has the potential to be traumatizing for our members, and we urge you to seek CISM support if you feel your mental health is in jeopardy. You may also feel your mental health is compromised due to the impacts of climate change, and we urge you to receive help for this as well.

As we have learned more about the devastating impacts of the extreme heat wave and Lytton fire, the ECCC feels it is important to recognize the role that climate change played in the catastrophe. While we cannot link any one weather event to climate change, the vast scientific consensus is that there will continue to be an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events as climate change continues unabated. This includes heatwaves such as the one we experienced June 25 - July 1, that may have been a contributing factor in the death over 700 British Columbians and preceded the fire in Lytton.

In 2017 we, the APBC, formally recognized this deadly trend. We also recognized that these events were going to make our work “more difficult and less safe.” Most of us experienced this firsthand two weeks ago. This is what it is like to work during an extreme heat wave, and it is indeed more difficult and less safe. Unfortunately, these conditions are only forecasted to get worse as the climate crisis worsens.

The ECCC would also like to reference the APBC mission statement where we commit to “... advocate for improved working conditions, health and economic status for our membership, **while striving to be an integral part of the solution to British Columbia's evolving community safety and healthcare challenges.**” Two weeks ago, quite likely as a result of unabated climate change, one of our communities was destroyed. This is a tragic and recent event that well stands as an example of how this component of our mission statement applies to the importance of the work the ECCC does.

We know that many of you are exhausted from working during simultaneous crises, and so are we, but we still feel it is necessary to ask you to continue to be adamant advocates for a sustainable climate. This is vitally important for ourselves and the communities we serve, and even more so for future generations and future members. This support is also more important now than ever before

to the work being carried out by your ECCC. As exemplified in the recent presentation by Alain Brunelle, CEO of Demers Ambulances, when he commented on the electrification of ambulances, “It’s coming, faster than we expected, be prepared...”, there are indications that the first EHS electric vehicles will be deployed in North America soon. A Paramedic’s attitude and willingness to adapt to these new vehicles could be of an immense value to the success of such pilot projects. It is the ECCC’s belief that proving the success of these pilot projects would be a great contribution to climate action, an accomplishment for the APBC to be proud of, an act of protecting the communities we serve, and be a rewarding experience for our participating members. So please support the work of the ECCC. Reach out to us if you have questions, concerns, or want to discuss our initiatives. Support these ideas in your communications with our colleagues. As these pilot projects are discussed, you may be asked about making a concession, such as driving a smaller car, or idling your vehicle less. Know that your openness to these conversations could be key to bringing about exciting opportunities for our members to pioneer emission-less EHS work. It is helpful to show management that we are willing to adjust our driving habits to reduce our carbon footprint, in having them meet our requests for clean energy vehicle deployments. We the ECCC will advocate for safe and comfortable vehicles that we think are good for our members, and that we would want to operate ourselves. And as this technology improves, so will our vehicles.

It is easy to be cynical when it comes to discussing the very difficult job of remedying climate change, but without hope for this cause, we are truly lost, and there are reasons for hope. To name just a few:

**1. The cost of renewables and energy storage is dropping rapidly**

- A 2019 report revealed that unsubsidized renewable energy in most circumstances became the cheapest source of energy generation. In addition, in 2020, the cost of energy storage had dropped by more than 90 per cent over the past 10 years.

**2. The Supreme Court affirmed that climate change is an emergency**

- In a recent ruling, Canada’s Supreme Court affirmed that “climate change is a threat of the highest order to the country, and indeed to the world.” The ruling recognizes that “a provincial failure to act directly threatens Canada as a whole.” It confirmed that the federal government has the authority to move ahead throughout the country to address the climate emergency.

**3. The U.S. has stepped up its ambition and is normalizing bold action**

- President Joe Biden is pursuing a comprehensive climate plan lauded by the staunchest climate activists. While he will no doubt have some difficulties passing these bills in the US house and senate where the democrats hold thin majorities, one bipartisan bill has already



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been agreed upon, and having this world superpower advocating for this type of change, normalizes climate action worldwide.

Source: <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/ten-reasons-hopeful-about-climate-action/>

The ECCC respectfully requests your help in maintaining this hope for a sustainable climate, for our members (future and present), and the communities we serve. It's not going to be easy, but this crisis can be overcome, and as we sink our teeth into this work, it has the potential to be more rewarding than we ever imagined.

Signed,

Environment and Climate Change Committee  
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC  
CUPE Local 873

/sb/MoveUp

