

A Resolution concerning the Climate Crisis for consideration of members of the Canadian Museums Association at the 2021 Annual General Meeting to be held on May 3rd, 2021.

The Canadian Museums Association: A Declaration on the Climate Crisis

Submitted by: Martin Segger FCMA

Seconded by: Robert R. Janes FCMA

Intent of the Resolution

On June 17, 2019, the House of Commons adopted the following motion: “*Canada is in a national climate emergency which requires, as a response, that Canada commit to meeting its national emission target under the Paris Agreement and to making deeper reductions in line with the agreement’s objective of holding global warming below two degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.*”

The sponsors of this resolution seek the backing of members of the Canadian Museums Association to declare, through their national association, clear and unequivocal support for the Government of Canada in addressing this critical issue. We do this with particular reference to the Prime Minister’s December 13, 2020 directive to the Minister of Canadian Heritage “to work with the national museums to increase Canadians’ awareness of climate change” along with the goals and initiatives outlined in the Government’s recently published national green plan— *A Healthy Environment and A Healthy Economy: Canada’s Strengthened Climate Plan to Create Jobs and Support People, Communities and the Planet* (1)

We also seek that the members of the CMA recognize that, as Canadians and world citizens, we are confronting an existential climate crisis. Much museum industry practice in the past has contributed to climate change, and the continued use of *status quo* practices further compounds this reality. Museum professionals, working directly with their employers, have a social, ecological and moral duty to enable transformational climate solutions within their institutions and society at large. In doing so they would be building upon the CMA/Biosphere-Environment Museum/Canadian Association of Science Museums study: *A Sustainable Development Guide for Canadian Museums* (2010), and also the work of the Canadian-based *Coalition of Museums for Climate Justice*.

This Resolution provides a framework for the Association to encourage sustained action, so that its members can be seen to be contributing to the mitigation of the damaging effects of climate warming, and be seeking to advance the national goal of a more carbon neutral economy in Canada.

Text of the Resolution

WHEREAS, the vision of the Canadian Museums Association is to be the leading voice for the museum profession in Canada, calling for museums as “permanent institutions in the service of society and its development” to steward the “tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment” (2);

AND WHEREAS, the mission of the CMA is to uphold “the highest professional standards and ethics” and to connect and engage members “with pressing issues and a common purpose” (3);

AND WHEREAS, the ethical values of the CMA include “honesty, fairness, respect, excellence and accountability which the larger community applies to the rational evaluation of moral issues” and “in a wider context, museums recognize the ethical implications of global issues which confront society at large, such as peace, security, freedom and the urgent need to preserve our environment” (4);

AND WHEREAS, in 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), (Paris Agreement) identified climate change as an “urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet... [requiring] the widest possible cooperation” (5);

AND WHEREAS, in 2018, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report confirmed the catastrophic consequences of our current trajectory and highlighted that bold action by 2030 will be critical for limiting global heating to 1.5°C—the threshold necessary to mitigate the most disastrous effects (6);

AND WHEREAS, the International Council of Museums at its General Assembly Meeting in Kyoto in September 2019 adopted a resolution ‘On Sustainability and the Implementation of *Agenda 2030, Transforming Our World*’ which calls on museums world-wide to acknowledge and reduce our environmental impact, including our carbon footprint, and help secure a sustainable future for all inhabitants of the planet: human and non-human (7);

AND WHEREAS, the Canadian Assembly of First Nations at their Annual General Assembly in Fredericton, 2020, passed a resolution declaring “a global climate emergency” and resolved to develop a First Nation-led climate strategy in cooperation with federal and provincial governments to keep global warming below 1.5C and reach net-zero emissions by 2050. (8)

AND WHEREAS, in 2019, the Government of Canada’s assessment report has since found that Canada is warming at twice the global average, and up to three times as quickly in the northern regions of the country (9);

AND WHEREAS, the Government of Canada and each province and territory of Canada has enacted legislation articulating carbon reduction to achieve an overall goal of carbon neutrality and frameworks of measurable actions to obtain carbon emission reductions in order to achieve that goal (10);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the CMA declares a climate emergency and pledges **to work towards achieving** an overall zero carbon standard within its own arena of administrative practice, while also striving to encourage all Canadian museums to adopt measures to achieve institutional net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 if at all possible, or by 2050 at the **very** latest (11);

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CMA calls upon the museum community to integrate the paradigm shifts in thought and action required to build environmental sustainability into the roles and responsibilities of museums and museum professionals;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CMA will seek a dialogue with Government of Canada, provincial museums associations and other affiliate organization in the Canadian museum community to assemble a multi-year, climate action strategy, including the articulation of measurable goals;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CMA will encourage its membership to position climate justice at the core of ethical practice, and encourage of its partners, allied organizations, communities and levels of government to do the same.

References

1. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/climate-change/climate-plan/healthy_environment_healthy_economy_plan.pdf
2. *ICOM Statutes*, 2007 http://archives.icom.museum/hist_def_eng.html
3. *CMA Strategic Plan*, June 2020
4. *CMA Ethical Guidelines*, 1999
5. *Paris Agreement* <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>
6. IPCC Special Report <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>
7. *Resolutions adopted by the 34th General Assembly of ICOM* <https://icom.museum/en/news/resolutions-adopted-by-icom-34th-general-assembly/>
8. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/assembly-first-nations-general-assembly-fredericton-1.5221127>
9. *Canada's Changing Climate Report* <https://changingclimate.ca/CCCR2019/>
10. *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/adapting/plans.html>
11. Canadian Net-Zero Goal: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/net-zero-carbon-emissions-1.5622776>

Respectfully submitted