



Expert Panel identifies top climate risks for Canada, potential for adaptation

News Release

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An expert panel convened by the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) has identified Canada's top climate change risks and determined that many costs and damages could be avoided with prompt and thoughtful adaptation.

Canada's climate is changing, with recent research showing that temperatures are rising twice as fast as the global average. Over the next 20 years, Canada can expect more frequent and severe hot extremes, thawing of permafrost, and increases in extreme precipitation.

"Climate change is increasingly leading to costly and disruptive impacts, and current projections suggest the warming in Canada and globally will continue, regardless of the trajectory of global emissions," said L. John Leggat, PhD, FCAE, Chair of the Expert Panel. "Understanding our top climate change risks and the role of adaptation in reducing these risks can help to support an effective response."

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat asked the CCA to examine the top climate change risks for Canada and their relative significance. Other studies have examined climate change risks at the sectoral and departmental level, but few have taken government-wide approach designed to help prioritize government responses.

Canada's Top Climate Change Risks identifies the top risk areas based on the extent and likelihood of the potential damage, and rates the risk areas according to society's ability to adapt and reduce negative outcomes. These 12 major areas of risk are: agriculture and food, coastal communities, ecosystems, fisheries, forestry, geopolitical dynamics, governance and capacity, human health and wellness, Indigenous ways of life, northern communities, physical infrastructure, and water.

The report describes an approach to inform federal risk prioritization and adaptation responses. The Panel outlines a multi-layered method of prioritizing adaptation measures based on an understanding of the risk, adaptation potential, and federal roles and responsibilities.

"Canada's unique geographic, environmental, and social identity shapes the hazards that it faces and its exposure to climate-related risks," said Eric M. Meslin, PhD, FCAHS, President and CEO of the CCA. "This report represents a high-level approach to prioritizing those risks, which we hope will help inform decision making about adaptation strategies."

Visit www.cca-reports.ca to download the report.

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About the Council of Canadian Academies

The CCA is a not-for-profit organization that undertakes independent, evidence-based expert panel assessments to inform public policy development in Canada. The CCA was founded by three independent organizations that represent some of the finest minds in Canada — the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Their Fellows and senior decision-makers sit on CCA's Board of Directors and Scientific Advisory Committee, and they are a key source of membership for expert panels. The CCA's founding Academies also provide key guidance and input throughout the assessment process, including expert panel nominations and dissemination processes. For more information about the CCA or its assessments, please visit www.cca-reports.ca.

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