

## Climate Justice Policy

LONG TITLE	Commitments to Climate Justice Policy	DATE OF ENACTMENT	4 August 2025
		LAST AMENDED	4 August 2025
REFERENCE No.	E-XX	NEXT REVIEW	August 2027
CATEGORY	Stances, Equity, and Advocacy	COMPETENT CHAMBER	Council

### PREAMBLE

CUSA has a responsibility to act in solidarity with those fighting climate injustice globally. As student representatives and future leaders, we must act to centre equity and intergenerational responsibility in our Carleton community. CUSA commits to adhering to a set of core principles, actions, and goals to fight climate injustice at Carleton and globally as laid out in this policy.

### INTERPRETATION

#### Short Title

**1** This Policy shall be called the *Climate Justice Policy* as an optional short-form title.

#### Review Timeline

**2** This Policy shall be reviewed every 2 (two) years by the University Affairs Committee.

#### Definitions

**3** In this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

**“Climate Justice”**, this policy adopts the Amnesty International definition as a framework of examining inequalities and how they’re magnified through the root causes of the climate crisis.<sup>1</sup>

**“Greenwashing”**, this policy adopts the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) definition, as the act of making false or misleading statements about the environmental benefits of a product or practice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International. “What is climate justice?”, Amnesty International, 2025.

<https://amnesty.ca/what-we-do/climate-justice/>

<sup>2</sup> Courtney Lindwall. “Explainer: What is Greenwashing?”, NRDC, 2023.

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-greenwashing>

**“Carbon Neutral”**, this policy adopts the European Parliament definition as the practice of having a balance between emitting and absorbing carbon dioxide, usually in the form of carbon sinks and emissions’ reductions.<sup>3</sup>

**“Environmental Racism”**, this policy adopts the NRDC definition, wherein it is the intentional siting, polluting and waste facilities primarily populated by marginalized groups.<sup>4</sup>

**“Just Transition”**, this policy adopts the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) definition as meeting climate goals by ensuring the whole of society – all communities, all workers, all social groups – are brought along in the pivot to a net-zero future.<sup>5</sup>

**“Non-Proliferation”**, this policy adopts the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative’s definition as ending the expansion of coal, oil and gas, and equitably phasing out existing production in keeping with what science shows is needed to address the climate crisis.<sup>6</sup>

**“Cooling Centre”** is defined as a public, cooled space aimed at providing refuge from heat and distributing water to the public during extreme temperatures.<sup>7</sup>

**“Scope 1, 2, and 3 Emissions”**, this policy adopts the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) definition as follows;

“Scope 1 Emissions” refers to direct emissions controlled or owned by the institution or company;

“Scope 2 Emissions” refers to indirect emissions from the purchase of energy;

“Scope 3 Emissions” refers to any other indirect emissions, including material used and waste generated, staff commutes with vehicles not owned or controlled by your company, and business travel.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Topics, European Parliament. “What is carbon neutrality and can it be achieved by 2050?” *EU Parliament*, 2019.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20190926STO62270/what-is-carbon-neutrality-and-how-can-it-be-achieved-by-2050>

<sup>4</sup> Maudlyne Ihejirika. “Guide: What is Environmental Racism?”, *NRDC*, 2023.

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-environmental-racism>

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Programme Climate Promise. “Blog Post: What is just transition? And why is it important?”, *UNDP*, 2022.

<https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-just-transition-and-why-it-important>

<sup>6</sup> Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. “Our Mission and History”, *Fossil Fuel Treaty*, 2025.

<https://fossilfuel treaty.org/about-treaty>

<sup>7</sup> Neil Singh Bedi et. al. The Role of Cooling Centers in Protecting Vulnerable Individuals from Extreme Heat, *Epidemiology* 33(5), 2022. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9378433/>

<sup>8</sup> Business Development Bank of Canada. “Scope 1, 2, and 3 carbon emissions”, *BDC*, 2024.

<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/templates-business-guides/glossary/scope-1-2-and-3-carbon-emissions>

- 4 This policy applies to all CUSA spaces including but not limited to: office spaces, businesses, service centres, online and in-person events, and to all CUSA staff including but not limited to: executive, full-time, and part-time.
  - a) This policy also applies to all CUSA volunteers, including Chonk Nation and the Climate Action Task Force.

## **MANDATE**

- 5 CUSA recognizes the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on marginalized communities both on-campus and globally, including Black, Indigenous, homeless, low-income, working-class, and those with visible or invisible disabilities.
  - a) CUSA commits itself to addressing these inequities through solidarity-building with movements around the globe, as well as concrete actions and campaigns on campus addressing the issue.
- 6 CUSA recognizes the invaluable contributions of Indigenous-land stewardship movements and the role that Indigenous peoples play in advancing the goals of climate justice.
- 7 CUSA acknowledges its duty, both as a representative of undergraduate students at Carleton and an advocacy organization in the wider community, to act in the best interests of students and promote a sustainable, just transition from fossil fuels.
- 8 CUSA acknowledges the negative impacts of capitalism and neo-colonialism on the proliferation of fossil fuels and the worsening climate crisis.

## **POLICY ADMINISTRATION**

- 9 The President and the Director of Operations have the responsibility of maintaining sustainable practices in both the work environment and on campus. They are responsible for following the procedures and strategies outlined in this policy.
- 10 The Vice President of Student Issues is responsible for advocating for climate justice within governmental structures, whether that be at the university-level, municipally, provincially and federally, as well as running sustainability-gearred events, campaigns, and programming in collaboration with the Vice President Student Life.

## **Stances and Programs**

### **Positions and Endorsements**

- 11 CUSA shall publicly endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and commit to further non-proliferation actions with respect to coal, oil, and natural gas exploration and exploitation.

- 12 CUSA shall endorse the aims and objectives of Movement Generation's Just Transition Framework.<sup>9</sup>
- 13 CUSA shall endorse the collective civil disobedience principles and strike action of the Fridays for Future Movement.<sup>10</sup>
- 14 CUSA shall endorse the collective stewardship and Indigenous land and resource management alternatives prescribed by the "Land Back" movement.<sup>11</sup>

### **Actions and Programs**

- 15 Formally designate and advertise CUSA's front office and businesses as cooling centres during regular operating hours, especially when temperatures far exceed seasonal averages, or persist for prolonged periods of time, as determined by Environment Canada's specifications for "Heatwaves".<sup>12</sup>
- 16 Have CUSA Think Tank create a Climate Literacy Guide, geared to first year students, detailing climate action efforts globally, CUSA's actions to address climate change, and documenting basic climate change terminology and statistics for reference.
- 17 Factor in the carbon footprint implications when planning events and new programming, with a preference for carbon-neutral or waste-neutral event planning.
- 18 Climate justice or climate advocacy training for its executives and business managers.
- 19 Commit to the formal divestment of its assets, if any, currently tied to fossil fuel companies, or companies highly invested in or involved in fossil fuels, and their relevant subsidiaries.
- 20 Endorsing or participating in an annual "Climate March" in Ottawa geared to students, either done solely or in cooperation with Ottawa-area climate activists and organizations.
- 21 Hosting an annual "Carleton Community Cleanup" event, led by the Vice President Student Issues and the Climate Action Task Force, to pick up waste in and around Carleton and the wider community.

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<sup>9</sup> Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project. From Banks and Tanks to Cooperation and Caring: A Strategic Framework for a Just Transition, *Movement Generation*, 2024. [https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/JT\\_booklet\\_English\\_SPREADs\\_web.pdf](https://movementgeneration.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/JT_booklet_English_SPREADs_web.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Fridays for Future Collective. "Reasons to Strike", *Fridays for Future*, 2025. <https://fridaysforfuture.org/take-action/reasons-to-strike/>

<sup>11</sup> Shiri Pasternak, Hayden King, and Riley Yesno. Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper, *Yellowhead Institute*, 2019. <https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/red-paper-report-final.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Environment Canada - Ontario Region. Glossary. *Environment Canada*, 2009. <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/community/classroom/glossary-e.html>

- 22** Host a buy-back bottle drive open to all Carleton students, where students can deposit and return pop cans, bottles, and other recyclable materials.
- 23** Create and implement the Climate Action Task Force, composed of the Vice President, Student Issues, and no less than four (4) CUSA Council members
  - a) The mandate of the Climate Action Task Force shall be to;
    - i) Create and organize initiatives related to CUSA's strategy on climate justice;
    - ii) Regularly review CUSA's existing policies from a climate justice lens;
    - iii) Develop and enhance campus partnerships for climate justice, particularly with CUSA Clubs.
- 24** CUSA commits to exploring future external partnerships to expand its waste diversion and climate change awareness strategy.
- 25** Employ sustainable practices in all CUSA businesses, including but not limited to;
  - a) Recycling at all of its business, service and office locations;
  - b) Employing the efficient use of water and energy;
  - c) Utilizing sustainable takeout packaging and reusable dishes where applicable;
  - d) Offering discounts for bringing your own mugs.
- 26** Develop a "Green Certification", in collaboration with the Vice President Internal and Clubs Oversight, for CUSA Clubs which meet carbon-neutral or zero-waste standards for events and programs.
- 27** Develop specific initiatives to fight environmental racism in the wider Ottawa community, including neighbourhood-specific initiatives.

### **Institutional Recommendations**

- 28** CUSA commits to the following recommendations to the University community, offices, etc.:
  - a) Facilities and Management Planning (FMP) to a review of currently available shaded outdoor spaces in high-traffic areas of campus.
  - b) Push for a permanent, 24/7 Cooling Centre on campus for students and wider community members.
  - c) Ensure existing hydration facilities, water bottle stations, and water fountains are operational and equally spread across campus facilities.
  - d) Support the decision of Carleton University's Board of Governors to divest any endowment from fossil fuel proliferators or their subsidiaries.
  - e) Ensure readily available plant-based or sustainable-alternative foods available at all food service facilities campus-wide.

- f) A formal mechanism of tracking and quantifying Scope 3 Emissions at Carleton University.
- g) Join over 7,000 universities globally in declaring a climate emergency.<sup>13</sup>
- h) Ban the use of unnecessary chemical herbicides and insecticides on campus.
- i) Expand a beta analysis of biodiversity from campus spaces into surrounding areas, such as Brewer Park, Vincent Massey Park, and the Dominion Arboretum.<sup>14</sup>
- j) Provide explicit opportunities for volunteer work on-campus as it relates to biodiversity goals and climate justice.
- k) Expand green bin and community composting opportunities on campus.
- l) Expand and introduce protected habitat areas on campus for campus wildlife, including groundhogs, birds, chipmunks, geese, and rabbits.
- m) A review of any university-wide or external greenwashing practices, including in campus facilities or causes supported by Carleton University internationally.
- n) Develop a collaborative approach with the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) to assist in the development and expansion of Kitigànensag, or the community garden.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES**

- 29** This aligns with other CUSA & Campus policies, including Existing Policies under Reference Letter E (Stances, Equity, and Advocacy).

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<sup>13</sup> NG Times Writers. "Climate Action Letter delivered to Carleton University's President, Provost, and Board of Governors", *North Grenville Times*, 2021.

<https://ngtimes.ca/climate-action-letter-delivered-to-carleton-universitys-president-provost-and-board-of-governors/>

<sup>14</sup> Carleton University. "Biodiversity Baseline Assessment", *Carleton University*, 2024.

<https://carleton.ca/sustainability/wp-content/uploads/Biodiversity-Assessment-2024.pdf>