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People First, Climate Forward:

Recentring B.C. climate policy

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Foreword

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) was created in 2008 with an endowment from the Government of British Columbia to support evidence-based climate policy. This investment in our university-based network was groundbreaking and remains a core strength of the organization.

In fulfilment of PICS’ mandate, this Insights Series elevates leading evidence at a pivotal moment for climate policy in B.C. Drawing on academic expertise from across the province, the series is designed to inform the 2025 independent review of CleanBC, British Columbia’s plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change.

When CleanBC was launched in 2018, climate action was a public and political priority. While concern about climate change remains widespread, it has increasingly been overshadowed by more immediate pressures, such as rising costs of living, strained public services, and growing geopolitical instability. Intensifying climate impacts exacerbate each of these challenges, which increases the complexity and opportunity for bold climate solutions. Now is not a time to retreat from ambition. Rather, it is a time for integrated solutions and public policy that unlock energy transformation, reduce climate risk, and increase prosperity at local, regional, and global scales.

The Insights Series highlights the deep connections between climate action and other top issues facing British Columbians: housing, affordability, economic competitiveness, Indigenous reconciliation, regional economic development, and fiscal efficiency.

B.C.’s climate leadership can be renewed—not by repeating the strategies of the past, but by evolving CleanBC to meet the realities of today.

Territory acknowledgement: At the University of Victoria, where the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) is hosted, we acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day

PICS and its university network have campuses across the province known as British Columbia. We respect and acknowledge the many unceded traditional territories and Nations where PICS universities stand including: x̱məθkʷəy̱əm (Musqueam) • Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) • sə́lilwətaʔt̓ (Tsleil-Waututh) • q̓ícəy̓ (Katzie) • k̓w̓ikʷə́łəm (Kwikwetlem) • Qayqayt • Kwantlen • Semiahmoo • Tsawwassen • Stó:lō • Syilx (Okanagan) • Dakelh (Carrier) territory: Lheidli T’enneh, Lhtako, Nazko, Lhoosk’uz • ʔEsdilagh, a Tsilhqot’in Nation • Dane-zaa territory: Doig River, Blueberry River, and Halfway River • Tsimshian territory: Kitsumkalum, Kitselas, Lax Kw’alaams, and Metlakatla • and Gitwinksihlkw, a Nisga’a Village.



Sunny beach of Golden Ears Provincial Park in early September, Maple Ridge. iStock

Executive summary

Durable policy must align with the shifting priorities of voters. When CleanBC was launched in 2018, climate action was top-of-mind. It was backed by a strong economy, a minority government seeking bold action, and a federal partner with high climate ambition. Today, the context is markedly different. While concern about climate change remains widespread, it has been overshadowed by more immediate pressures including the rising costs of living, strained public services, and growing geopolitical instability.

“For a renewed CleanBC to succeed, it must shift from a climate-first to a people-first framing.”

B.C.’s shifting context has reshaped the terrain for climate action. Fiscal constraints have tightened, public trust has frayed, and polarization around climate policy has intensified. At the same time, more British Columbians feel disengaged. This is not due to apathy, but to policy narratives that do not connect with their day-to-day lives. Into this void, misinformation and disinformation is spreading, targeting disengaged voters with emotionally charged stories that portray climate action as unfair, ineffective, or elite-driven.

For a renewed CleanBC to succeed, it must respond to British Columbians’ current realities. This means shifting from a climate-first to a people-first framing—designing and communicating climate action in ways that align with people’s priorities and lived experiences. A renewed CleanBC must show how climate policy can deliver good jobs, lower household costs, strengthen public health, and build more resilient communities. It must also bring people into the

process through trusted messengers, regionally tailored policies, and pathways that reflect the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all transition to net zero.

In this analysis, we propose five strategic shifts for a renewed CleanBC:

1. Adopt a people-first narrative focused on well-being and livelihoods:

Frame climate action around the issues that matter most to British Columbians—affordability, jobs, safety, and health—so that policy feels relevant, empowering, and hopeful.

2. Ground emissions targets in tangible, relatable outcomes that can be seen:

Pair high-level goals with visible markers of progress, such as more heat pumps, transit access, or clean energy projects, to help people see climate action working in their communities.

3. Reflect local and regional realities in policy development:

Move away from one-size-fits-all approaches by designing flexible, place-based policies that reflect the unique needs, opportunities, and values of different communities.

4. Cultivate trusted messengers and diversify communications channels:

Use credible, relatable voices, such as peers, doctors, Indigenous leaders, and local champions, and reach people through multiple platforms, from social media to town halls.

5. Invest in countering misinformation and disinformation:

Build public resilience with clear, accessible messaging, pre-bunking strategies, and stronger climate literacy efforts that target the moveable middle and inoculate against delay narratives.

Getting this right is not just about meeting climate goals, it is about strengthening public confidence and improving the lives of British Columbians.



Since 2021 Lime e-bikes were introduced into cities like Vancouver, Coquitlam and Kelowna to enhance transit integration, respond to urban and environmental challenges and bridge transit gaps. *iStock*



Communities across B.C. are understandably concerned about pressing health, social, economic, and geopolitical issues that threaten immediate well-being. *iStock*

Purpose

In May 2025 an independent review panel was tasked to “examine, evaluate, and update current climate targets, and recommend policies, programs, and initiatives to achieve significant emissions reductions in the province to meet these updated targets.”¹ The panel’s challenge is to identify ways the Government of British Columbia can get back on course to meet mid- and longer-term emissions targets of CleanBC.

“Climate policy has grown more polarizing, muddying the political motivation for ambitious policy.”

The CleanBC review comes at a moment of climate headwinds. Communities across B.C. are understandably concerned about pressing health, social, economic, and geopolitical issues that

threaten immediate well-being.² Meanwhile, climate policy has grown more polarizing across the province and country, muddying the political motivation for ambitious policy. In this paper we explore the importance of public support for and participation in climate policies, and the implications for a future CleanBC. Meeting constituencies where they are at and ensuring policies have real and tangible value is vital to getting wind back in the sails of climate action.

Background: building on achievements

CleanBC, British Columbia’s plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change, was created in the wake of the 2017 provincial election. It reflects that political moment: climate as a top-of-mind voter priority; a strategic need for the NDP minority government to agree to a robust climate plan

with an opposition Green Party; a strong provincial economy; and a federal government with high climate ambitions. The 2018 CleanBC plan set science-driven emission reductions targets and laid out evidence-based technology pathways to meet those targets, driven by strong climate-first policies.

CleanBC reaffirmed B.C.'s position as a North American climate leader, building on established B.C. policies and programs and setting a course to measurable progress. By 2022, the net greenhouse gas intensity of the economy had fallen by 30.5 per cent of 2007 levels and the net greenhouse gas emissions per person fell by 21.6 per cent. Industrial emissions fell by 11 per cent; methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 45 per cent; building and communities emissions by six per cent. Measures since then, including biofuel blending and the zero-carbon building code, are forecast to contribute further reductions. People across B.C. were also living the change by 2022. More homes were being heated and cooled by heat pumps; home retrofits were up; public transit ridership was up; and B.C. households in the Lower Mainland and the Island were leading North America in zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) purchases.³

Despite the massive changes underfoot, the core indicator of climate impact—net emission reductions—flatlined. By 2022, B.C.'s high economic and population growth rates were nearly cancelling out the substantial per-capita emissions reductions under way. In fact, net emissions in 2022 were

down only 2.2 per cent from 2007 levels and by 2025, the government conceded that “the current policy landscape does not put the Province on track to meet its 2030 targets” of 40 per cent below 2007 levels.³ Through CleanBC, the province has achieved many ambitious climate goals despite not meeting its targets. This speaks to the complexities of developing climate plans and the importance of this review and next steps.

Context

Shifting political and economic realities and public priorities

Durable policy goes with the grain of voters. For CleanBC to deliver, climate policy will need to reflect the political moment of 2025, a moment profoundly different from 2017. While climate was still a concern for voters in the 2024 provincial election, it was overshadowed by other issues including cost of living and housing, access to healthcare, the economy, crime and public safety, as well as addiction and mental health.⁴ Voters signaled this shift in concerns by moving to the political right, particularly in rural and interior ridings; dropping support for the Greens; and giving the NDP a minority of seats.

“While climate was still a concern for voters in the 2024 B.C. election, it was overshadowed by other issues.”



Victoria's large mixed use development Dockside Green features a biomass gasification plant (making it carbon neutral in operations), onsite wastewater treatment, and water reuse—reinforcing sustainable neighborhood-scale design prior to the formal code. [Source](#)

Donald Trump's win for a second term as U.S. President unleashed a hinge moment of geopolitical, economic, and tariff uncertainty for all of Canada, B.C. included. The 2025 B.C. Speech from the Throne⁵ and subsequent Budget⁶ responded to the threat, prioritizing economic growth, trade diversification, clean energy and mining investment, and support for B.C. manufacturing and innovation. Issues were layered onto the NDP's election platform priorities, which included training for skilled trades; investing in critical transportation infrastructure; and supporting a surging population by strengthening housing availability and access to healthcare, protecting public services, and ensuring community safety and resilience.

BOX 1: WHAT IS THE MOVABLE MIDDLE AND WHY ARE THEY STRATEGICALLY CRITICAL?

The “moveable middle” represents a broad and strategically critical segment of British Columbians—those who are concerned about climate change, support clean energy, and believe more should be done, but are not yet deeply engaged. This group is not ideologically opposed to climate action; rather, they are focused on more pressing personal and economic concerns. Many lack strong climate literacy, do not see clear links between climate policies and their daily lives, and are especially susceptible to narratives that frame climate action as burdensome, unfair, or disconnected from local realities.^{2, 11}

Engaging this demographic is essential for sustaining public license and building the durable, cross-partisan support that long-term climate ambition requires. The moveable middle includes a large share of rural, suburban, and working-class voters, many of whom sit outside traditional climate constituencies but are open to action if it aligns with their values and priorities.

A record \$10.9-billion projected deficit and rising debt-to-GDP ratio alongside significant trade-related risks has brought notable fiscal constraints to the provincial government’s agenda. A further \$1.8 billion in revenue is estimated to be lost with the elimination of B.C.’s consumer carbon tax in April 2025.⁷ This loss of consumer carbon tax revenue comes at a challenging time when the Government of British Columbia is seeking to rein in spending.

A large majority of B.C. voters still want action on climate

B.C. voters continue to want action on climate change. Polling has repeatedly shown that most B.C. voters are still concerned about what climate change means for their future, despite this concern being overshadowed by more immediate concerns:

- » A May 2024 poll found 21 per cent of B.C. voters identified environment/climate change as one of their top three issues.⁸
- » A September 2024 poll found 75 per cent of British Columbians believe we all need to do “a bit more” or “much more” to deal with climate change, with little variation across regions.⁹
- » A post-mortem assessment of the role that climate change played in the October 2024 election found that while cost-of-living concerns were top-of-mind, 86 per cent of B.C. voters want the Government of B.C. to make addressing climate change a very high, high, or medium priority.⁴

Support for climate action also spans the political spectrum. Seventy-two per cent of B.C. Conservative voters believe climate change should be at least a medium priority.⁴ A 2025 Re.Climate study reinforces this, showing 61 per cent of British Columbians—of which half are on the political right—are part of the “moveable middle”¹⁰ (see Box 1).

Public attitudes on climate reflect the moment and should guide future climate policy. Indeed, British Columbians want strong climate action woven into other societal priorities linked to cost-of-living, well-being, and livelihoods. Engagement with the public is critical to unlocking B.C.’s potential.

B.C. voters are not feeling engaged in current climate plans and policies

The economy, cost of living, health care, and public safety are considered the priority issues currently facing British Columbians. For many people, connecting those issues to climate change is difficult, and as a result, climate action has fallen down their list of priorities.

Some factors exacerbating this feeling of disengagement from climate action relate to the framing (narratives) of climate plans and policies:¹⁰

- » Expressing climate targets as abstract emission reduction concepts does not resonate with people’s immediate concerns (such as local economies, affordability, fairness, health, resiliency) or convey more tangible outcomes that have broad support (such as growth in renewable energy, expanded regional transit).

- » “Climate crisis” messaging fosters fatalism, particularly if not accompanied with a clear path for people to participate in climate solutions.
- » Positioning of climate action as a burden or sacrifice, or taking a moralizing tone, adds to stress and anxiety.

Disengagement is also driven by perceptions that current climate policies are designed by the elite economic and political class, reflecting their distinct realities. The elite-driven perception comes through in urban vs. rural divides and the sentiment that climate policy does not reflect the realities and needs of everyday British Columbians.¹² Support for specific climate policies is often best assessed through their perceived fairness to people with low income or those living in rural communities or small towns,¹³ in short, people least likely to engage with those policies in the first place. For example, policies promoting electric vehicle uptake may be seen as unfair to those living in rural and remote communities, as electric vehicles are seen as either too costly or impractical due to a lack of access to qualified electric vehicle mechanics, reliable charging infrastructure, and/or limited vehicle options.

Without strong public engagement, the Government of B.C. will miss a strategic opportunity to advance climate action in a manner that supports a healthy and resilient economy and population, especially as the issue of climate become increasingly politicized.



In a charged political context, it's challenging for citizens to wade through the various messages, especially in an era of sophisticated disinformation campaigns. iStock

“In a charged political context, it's challenging for citizens to wade through the various messages, especially in an era of sophisticated disinformation campaigns.”

Climate policy is being drawn into broader culture wars

Policy messaging matters as much as policy design. Growing polarization, more fragmented news and information sources, and distrust in government have muddled the plotline for climate policy. In B.C. this divide often shows up along three lines: rural versus urban perspectives, jobs versus the environment, and progressive versus populist worldviews.¹² This polarization is not happening by accident. Bad-faith actors are deliberately stoking division, using issues like the consumer carbon tax, 15-minute cities, or bans on natural gas heating to turn climate action into a flashpoint in a broader culture war.¹⁴

The new media and political environment make it harder to find a foothold through traditional communications. Messages from governments, business leaders, scientists, or academics—historically trusted views—are now often viewed with skepticism and even scorn, particularly by those outside major urban centres or on the political right. Many voters feel these “elite” voices are out of touch with everyday concerns like affordability, job security, and community well-being.¹² Among conservatives and centrists, there's growing mistrust in institutions they perceive as left-associated, especially universities and scientific organizations.^{12, 15}

Meanwhile, well-meaning, fact-based climate messages are struggling to cut through. Analytical reports shared with narrow audiences can't compete with populist, emotionally charged anti-climate content designed to spread quickly and widely on social media.¹²

In such a charged political context, it's challenging for citizens to wade through the various messages, especially in an era of sophisticated disinformation campaigns.

Disinformation is confusing voters and decision makers

Disinformation campaigns are presenting a serious challenge to climate engagement. Industry groups, think tanks, and online actors seed doubt about climate science as a strategy to delay climate progress. That climate denial strategy has evolved into “climate delay” narratives and climate-related conspiracy theories.¹⁶ The objective is to sow confusion and disbelief in the need and effectiveness of climate policy. Some examples of these narratives include: blaming other countries or jurisdictions for greenhouse gas emissions; positioning fossil fuels as essential to a low-carbon transition; promoting incremental actions and voluntary policies; and framing emissions reduction as burdensome and ineffective.¹⁷ Climate delay narratives frequently use emotionally charged content to tap into public anxieties, including worries about cost-of-living and the economy.¹⁷ The disinformation narratives also frequently take advantage of information fatigue and digital disorientation by embracing people’s anxieties and concerns, and framing climate action as an unnecessary burden that makes voters worse off.¹⁰

These climate delay narratives deliberately target the moveable middle.¹⁰ More troubling still, they are accompanied by climate conspiracies that blame climate impacts on government actions—such as in Alberta’s 2023 wildfires—or that scapegoat vulnerable groups.^{16, 18} Such disinformation further erodes trust in government and public institutions.

Thus, strong climate policy requires strong and strategic communication and engagement, and B.C. is at a perfect moment to refresh and roll out this approach.

Recommendations and discussion

B.C.’s approach to combatting climate change has been rooted in a strong climate-first, science-driven framing. This framing has left a broad constituency of B.C. voters feeling excluded and disengaged. Consequently, and in the additional context of proliferating misinformation and disinformation, ambitious climate action may be losing its social license and feeding polarization. To shift public engagement from passive concern to active support, climate policy and messaging needs a deliberate rebalance, centred on the immediate concerns of British Columbians.



CleanBC should ensure policies and messaging put people’s immediate concerns about safety, cost of living, healthcare, and housing front and centre. iStock

We propose five strategic approaches the Government of British Columbia could use to rebalance the way climate policy is designed, seen, and felt:

- 1. Adopt a people-first narrative focused on well-being and livelihoods:** *Frame climate action around the issues that matter most to British Columbians—affordability, jobs, safety, and health—so that policy feels relevant, empowering, and hopeful.*

Ensure CleanBC policies and messaging puts people’s immediate concerns about safety, cost of living, healthcare, and housing front and centre. This requires a significant shift from stories about emissions-reduction to stories about positive gains for B.C. voters.¹⁷ Lessons can be learned from the framing of the 2022 U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, which was purposefully framed as an investment agenda to address people’s concerns about job security and economic stability and broaden the constituencies for its initiatives. Updates on the Inflation Reduction Act’s impacts also reflected this framing by tracking material benefits such as creation of good paying jobs, expanded opportunity, and lower energy costs.¹⁹ Public support for the Inflation Reduction Act remained strong, including in conservative jurisdictions, even as many of its gains fell victim to President Trump’s tax cuts.²⁰

“Narrative reframes could include a shift from stories about emissions-reduction to stories about positive gains for B.C. voters.”

Specific narrative reframes could include:

a. Harness emotions to build hope and empower:

Evoke emotions of hope and pride by showcasing B.C. leadership (e.g., in renewable energy and Indigenous-led clean energy); framing climate action as a vehicle to a better future (e.g., good jobs, healthier and safer communities); and showing how people can easily participate (e.g., action is possible, even desirable or enjoyable, not a burden). This makes climate action feel personal and achievable, key to mobilizing the moveable middle, and can also counter fear and loss narratives in climate delay discourses.¹⁷

b. Lead with the public priority benefits: Start narratives with a policy’s material benefits first. For example, how new jobs are being created through renewable energy, electrification, and retrofits; how carbon-competitiveness helps B.C. industry in global markets; how heat pumps lower energy bills and provide thermal safety in heat waves; how bike lanes enable affordable transportation for young families. Position emissions reductions as a co-benefit.²¹

c. Lean into the benefits for public health: Narratives that show how policies can improve health outcomes, reduce pressure on the healthcare system, and safeguard society against climate impacts are potentially effective in B.C. as health issues resonate “strongly with voters”.¹⁷

d. Showcase environmental benefits: British Columbians have a strong “cultural identity as a province rich in natural beauty,”¹⁷ and narratives that frame the links between climate action and the environment/biodiversity particularly resonate with the moveable middle.²²

e. Adapt messaging for specific audiences, regions, and demographics: Aligning narratives with local priorities builds trust and relevance. For example, in resource-dependent regions, focus on economic opportunities from clean energy projects. This might include local jobs, investment, and economic diversification, or quality of life and livelihood improvements from expanded regional transit.²³

2. Ground emissions targets in tangible, relatable outcomes that can be seen: Pair high-level goals with visible markers of progress, like more heat pumps, transit access, or clean energy projects to help people see climate action working in their communities.

a. Pair emission targets with relatable and tangible targets:

Emissions are abstract, but public and active transit, wind and bioenergy projects, household technologies, nature-based solutions and the growth of the clean technology sector (and the jobs it brings) are not. Establish these tangible targets and prioritize these initiatives in communications, while also tracking emissions impact.

b. Share win-win stories: Win-win messages resonate with voters across the political spectrum and help overcome paralysis and media fatigue. They highlight that climate action can be both effective in reducing emissions and improving lives through better jobs, lower costs, and more resilient communities.

3. Reflect local and regional realities in policy development:

Move away from one-size-fits-all approaches by designing flexible, place-based policies that reflect the unique needs, opportunities, and values of different communities.

People need to feel a part of climate solutions and included in finding solutions for the places where they live. Not all policies require deep engagement. But



British Columbians have a strong “cultural identity as a province rich in natural beauty.” Columbia River in Revelstoke. iStock



In addition to peers, local community and Indigenous leaders, physicians are regarded as trusted and relatable messengers, seen as better attuned to people's values and priorities than politicians or other 'elite' experts. *iStock*

policies that directly impact daily life like home retrofits, transportation shifts, or land use planning benefit from meaningful engagement.

Engagement that is rooted in local and regional coalition-building and which prioritizes place-based pathways can take various forms, including:

- a. Feedback loops** so there is a “living dialogue” between policymakers and the public, e.g., through regular climate surveys or regional polling
- b. Community conversations** in communities across the province (rather than relying on mass messaging). Build trust by partnering with local organizations that have strong relationships with communities or different demographics.
- c. Climate assemblies:** citizen groups selected by lottery to deliberate and recommend climate actions can foster trust and reduce polarization. They also help build a more climate-literate and politically engaged public.¹⁷
- d. Storytelling and information-sharing** so the public can share successful initiatives, personalize climate action and build momentum. Peer-to-peer storytelling and relationship-building, such as a farmer discussing solar savings or a youth leader describing a community initiative, often resonate more powerfully than traditional messaging.

Inclusive, localized, and ongoing engagement supports policy durability and can be more than a check in; it can be built into the design of climate policies themselves by giving greater regional agency for transition pathways, recognizing that there is no one pathway to net zero.²⁴ This shift away from a “one-size-fits-all” design approach focuses on place-based adaptability and provides people, communities, and different regions with agency in tailoring co-designed climate action to regional realities. It might include expanded regional transit in rural as well as urban regions; community-specific heat pump or household solar deployment and related workforce training strategies; or local bioenergy initiatives. Combining this with tangible, trackable, and localized climate metrics can also boost engagement, e.g., tracking the number of installed heat pumps in one town, shift in transport modes, or percentage of renewables in local grids.

Finally, a coalition-building engagement model supports a key consideration for a renewed CleanBC: alignment with DRIPA. This involves ongoing engagement and relationship building with First Nations that respects “duty to consult” principles and Indigenous self-determination (and distinct from the community engagement addressed above). Approaches could include co-developing policies with First Nations and ensuring benefits (funding, jobs, capacity building) flow to Indigenous communities.

“Inclusive, localized, and ongoing engagement supports policy durability and can give greater regional agency for transition pathways.”

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- 4. Support and encourage trusted messengers and diversified communications channels:** *Use credible, relatable voices such as peers, doctors, Indigenous leaders, and local champions and reach people through multiple platforms, from social media to town halls.*

Engaging diverse messengers to share narratives about climate action can address the current trust deficit and re-engage British Columbians in climate action. Credible and relatable messengers include peers, local community

leaders, Indigenous leaders, and physicians, as there is a perception they understand peoples' values and priorities more than politicians or "elite" experts.¹⁰

The moveable middle is most influenced by their peers, families, and friends.¹⁰ This demographic also considers doctors as "some of the most trusted messengers."¹⁷ As health care is a core priority for British Columbians, physicians speaking to the health benefits of clean air or protection from extreme heat could resonate strongly across the province. Partnering with First Nations leaders to share narratives on how Indigenous land stewardship aligns with climate goals and contributes to the well-being of people, communities and the environment also builds trust and engagement.²⁵⁻²⁷

As well as diversifying messengers, a multi-channel approach that includes targeted digital media, local and regional media, and in-person interactions alongside mainstream media can build trust and engagement. This is particularly true if different communications tools are used, such as strong emotionally resonant visuals to accompany the messages.

Another dimension of trust is institutional: people need to trust that climate programs will be fair and effective. Past experiences, such as rebate programs that were hard to access can erode trust. For example, B.C.'s electric vehicle rebate program was recently paused to review its income cut-off, which unintentionally excluded many middle-class and younger families, the demographic that was likely both most interested and likely to benefit.²⁸ Ground-up engagement might have identified this sooner. Effective engagement can address legitimate public concerns about fairness and competence.

5. Invest in countering disinformation: *Build public resilience with clear, accessible messaging, pre-bunking strategies, and stronger climate literacy efforts that target the moveable middle and inoculate against delay narratives.*

Fostering an information environment full of factual, relevant, and hope-oriented climate narratives combat the disinformation of the climate counter-movement. Specific strategies include building media literacy, directly countering mis/disinformation, and reframing narratives as discussed in Section 3.1.¹⁷

For example, there is evidence that pre-empting misinformation or disinformation with simple, accessible facts about false claims is an effective strategy. This approach has worked in public health and political campaigns.¹⁷

Boosting climate literacy through a targeted provincial campaign¹⁰ or funding research on individuals, organizations, and institutions promoting disinformation could also help counter this movement. Another strategy is to hold the climate change counter-movement accountable for "intentionally spreading harmful disinformation."¹⁷

Finally, robust public engagement is itself a defense against mis/disinformation. If people feel genuinely informed and involved in the policy process and the messaging comes through reliable sources, they are less likely to be swayed by misinformation or disinformation.

“Robust public engagement is itself a defense against mis/disinformation.”

Conclusion

At this pivotal juncture, CleanBC has the chance to regain momentum and secure durable climate progress by putting people first.

CleanBC must evolve to meet the realities of today, not the conditions of 2018. This means shifting from a climate-first to a people-first strategy that speaks directly to the pressures British Columbians now face: affordability, job security, health, and community well-being. CleanBC can rebuild public trust and broaden the coalition of support by reframing climate action as a pathway to lower household costs, stronger services, rewarding livelihoods, and tangible benefits that British Columbians can see.

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