

28 March, 2022

**Backgrounder regarding CWCF’s Resolution on Climate Change to the CMC AGM, 2022**

The reasons that the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation (“CWCF”) introduced the resolution on climate change are as follows.

* As the effects of climate change become more intense and more apparent, many co-operatives and co-operative members across Canada are being adversely affected.
* Weather and climate events are becoming more severe and extreme the world over, resulting in heatwaves, wildfires, heavy precipitation, flooding, droughts, rising sea levels, and hurricanes that have been both deadly and costly.
* Rising temperatures are linked to increasingly unpredictable, intense, and extreme weather events, which in 2021 included catastrophic fire as well as flooding in Lytton, BC with widespread flooding in BC, plus longer and hotter wildfire seasons, heatwaves, and hailstorms.
* There were $2.1 billion in insurable losses in Canada in 2021 due to climate change-related natural disasters and extreme weather, including flooding, hail, and wildfires.
* Climate change unequivocally threatens not only sustainable development, but the survival of millions of people around the world through  undermining food security, extreme weather events, sea level rise, ocean acidification and other impacts.
* The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded that unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach. The report finds that averaged over the next 20 years, global temperature is expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C of warming. While even the best-case scenario of 1.5°C will bring weather and climate changes that will affect the whole world, failing to limit warming risks even greater catastrophic changes.
* Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada (CMC) should therefore be mandated on behalf of its members to advocate for meaningful action on climate change according to the co-operative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In so doing, CMC would join a diverse and growing movement within society.

How the resolution will help the co-operative sector:

* The resolution would eventually help lessen negative impacts of climate change on those co-operatives and co-op members being negatively affected by adverse weather events, which are being intensified by climate change.
* Passing the resolution will strengthen our commitment to fulfilling these co-operative principles.  Principle 7 of the Co-operative Principles states that “Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members,” and all of the Co-operative Principles speak to putting human beings at the heart of decision-making. The resolution will support the many cooperatives in Canada which are already actively engaged in or leading efforts to address climate change in their respective communities.

Expectations of CMC:

* That CMC demonstrate leadership on climate change by signing on to Race to Zero.
* That CMC develop a cooperatives-specific promotion program to encourage and support its members to participate in the Race to Zero initiative.
* That as part of its government relations strategy, CMC undertake federal advocacy efforts in keeping with these commitments and strategy.
  + Write to the federal Minister of the Environment and all environment critics requesting that all parties commit to advancing a climate change agreement based on the principles above;
  + Encourage members to write to their elected officials with a similar request;
  + Work with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) on a joint statement in support of a comprehensive treaty to which states will be bound; and
  + Emphasize member co-operatives’ roles in the sustainable, social economy by sharing knowledge and capital resources to enhance their outreach and ability to implement sustainable practices.