

ENVIR ACTION

Winter/Spring 2008

CUPE NEB takes action on climate change

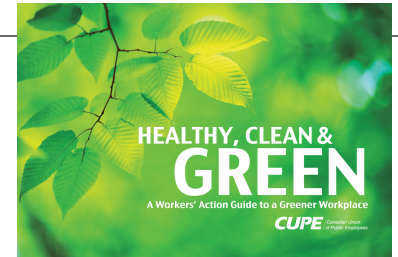
CUPE's National Executive Board passed a resolution at its December 2007 meeting that commits CUPE to taking serious action on climate change. The resolution was passed to coincide with the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Bali, Indonesia.

Actions for CUPE include:

- calling on the Canadian government to develop a national climate change strategy, respecting provincial jurisdiction, that includes public investment in community, social and energy infrastructure, public transit and conservation, and measures such as building retrofits and wind and solar energy.
- insisting that the Canadian government create and fund a Just Transition program to protect potentially displaced workers.
- being part of the solution by establishing a climate change policy that sets greenhouse gas reduction targets for CUPE.
- exercising its influence to bring about positive workplace change by working with employers to set up workplace environmental committees; using collective agreements as a lever for climate change action; helping to educate and train workers on climate change; and working with community groups to promote sustainability.



Climate change is a huge issue that demands action on several fronts. CUPE, through this new resolution, will do its part to fight climate change and make our communities greener, more equitable and sustainable.



New workers' guide published

CUPE members have a new workplace environmental guide. The just-published booklet – *Healthy, Clean & GREEN: A Workers' Action Guide to a Greener Workplace* – shows what steps workers can take to make their workplaces environmentally sustainable.

Climate change, waste reduction and environmental rights are some of the issues covered, but action is at the heart of the booklet. It spells out what CUPE members can do at work and in their communities to tackle some of the pressing environmental problems we face. Copies of the 24-page publication, produced with input from the National Environment Committee, are free of charge by writing mfirth@cupe.ca. More than 10,000 copies of the green guide have been distributed to CUPE members to date.

CUPE convention: environmental leadership

Environmental issues were front and centre at the National Convention in Toronto. CUPE is taking a leadership position by moving green issues to the heart of the union's priorities and actions. The following highlights from the 2007 event show CUPE going green:

- CUPE's Strategic Directions policy document now has a significant section on environmental initiatives. Titled "Meeting Global Green Targets," it commits CUPE to take a leadership role on climate change; develop a policy and action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; create strategies, tools and environmental educational materials; and develop an energy policy that supports CUPE's environmental policy.
- CUPE will also pursue environmentally-friendly buildings in all new construction.
- CUPE is urging members to cut their carbon and to improve the union's green record at all its events. The National Environment Committee created guidelines to help delegates lower their carbon footprint at convention, as large events can cause environmental harm. Guidelines included: taking the train rather than flying; choosing public transit over taxis; and conserving energy, particularly computer and other electronic usage during convention.
- CUPE's Environment booth at the convention gallery set up an online carbon footprint calculator to measure how much carbon members emit into the atmosphere based on their driving, flying and living habits. More than 100 delegates took the survey, with some having below-average scores of just over one tonne of carbon per year. The 10 delegates with the lowest carbon footprints were rewarded for their environmentalism with a bright green CUPE Enviro Action T-shirt.



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Winners of 2007 Earth Day poster contest

Twelve children have won hip environment-friendly flashlights and backpacks for their creative efforts in CUPE's fifth annual Earth Day poster contest for kids.

This year's winners come from across the country and range in age from seven to 12. For the first time, there is an international winner, as posters were submitted from outside of Canada. The kids' posters celebrate Earth Day, April 22.

"Drive a hybrid," said 12-year-old Jane's poster. Seven-year-old Owen's poster urged viewers to compost, recycle, ride a bike rather than drive and plant trees. Eleven-year-old Isaac drew a beautiful poster of a clean and green world. Protecting wildlife habit, stopping climate change and using renewable resources were some of the other ideas conveyed in the winning children's posters.

Winners are:

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| Jane | Newfoundland and Labrador |
| Kaitlyn | Nova Scotia |
| Brae | Prince Edward Island |
| Émilie & Stéphanie (coloured one poster together) | Quebec |
| Owen, Jane | Ontario |
| Isaac, Kenadi | Alberta |
| Rhonda | Saskatchewan |
| Natasha | British Columbia |
| Tori | International |

The contest is sponsored by CUPE's National Environment Committee through the work of the Health and Safety branch in Ottawa. Here are the 2007 winners, whose posters you can see online at <http://cupe.ca/gallery2/v/Earthday2007/>

Deadline for the 2008 Earth Day poster contest is May 30, 2008. To order posters, please email environment@cupe.ca.