

CUPE in Paris for climate talks

Charles Fleury, national secretary-treasurer of CUPE, led a delegation pushing for successful climate change negotiations at COP21 last December in Paris. COP (Conference of the Parties) is the annual meeting of world governments working on terms to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the cause of climate change. Fleury spoke at an event of labour and government leaders, emphasizing the public sector's role in renewable energy and municipal climate change adaptation. The forum looked at better ways of working and how new green jobs can slow climate change.

CUPE also took part in an earlier conference hosted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) that highlighted labour progress on climate change. The ITUC presented its priorities to UN negotiators working to reach a deal at COP21: that a just transition for workers be included in the core agreement; that adequate financing be provided for adaptation in developing countries; and that nations agree to a high level of ambition to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Before COP21, CUPE members took part in rallies and marches across Canada. From Charlottetown to Vancouver, they joined other labour, Aboriginal and civil society groups calling for meaningful action on climate change. Under the banner "100 per cent possible", the marches showed diverse support for a clean, green and sustainable society. Approximately 25,000 people marched through the streets of Ottawa, the largest climate change rally held in Canada to date.

At the end of the day, an agreement was reached at COP21, and is viewed by many as a starting point for more work ahead. The Paris agreement signals progress on climate change being made, but cuts in greenhouse gas emissions need to intensify. "An imperfect agreement is better than no agreement at all, but now the real work continues," says Fleury. "This is where CUPE needs to work to hold Canadian governments accountable and to continue to fight for action on climate change that brings workers along as part of the solution, while creating good, green public sector jobs."



Take action in your local and in your community!

A new, interactive climate change tool for CUPE activists is ready for use in their locals, workplaces and communities. "Starting to Talk: CUPE Climate Change Conversations" helps CUPE members explore actions they can take on climate change. Email enviro@cupe.ca if you're interested in hosting this short slide presentation and discussion.

Do you want to be part of a green jobs roundtable discussion in your community? CUPE is a partner and founding member of the Green Economy Network (GEN), a national group of unions and others advocating for good jobs that are better for the climate. In the last year, CUPE took part in a series of community-level roundtable discussions in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and other Canadian cities. Email enviro@cupe.ca if you're interested in bringing a green jobs discussion to your community.

CUPE takes an environmental leap at National Convention

Environmental and social justice activist Naomi Klein brought her message of change and renewal to CUPE National Convention in Vancouver. Klein gave a rousing keynote address to the convention delegates and also spoke before more than one thousand CUPE members and civil society activists at a huge climate change rally.

Klein's newest book *This Changes Everything* puts the public sector front and centre as a tool for helping veer our society away from its reliance on fossil fuels that cause climate change. Klein is also one of the authors of the related *Leap Manifesto*, which describes how we can transform our ways of living and working to protect the climate and respect indigenous rights. CUPE signed on to the Manifesto (leapmanifesto.org) at the first opportunity. Mark Hancock, the newly elected national president of CUPE, Hancock's predecessor Paul Moist, and

Charles Fleury, national secretary-treasurer, spoke about how CUPE and the public sector can work to build a fair and sustainable society where green jobs are good jobs.

Green stewards shared the environmental message throughout convention by encouraging delegates to walk, use public transit, use the convention centre's environmental features, and conserve. CUPE partnered with CarbonZero to calculate the convention's greenhouse gas emissions. CUPE is using this data to spearhead our own carbon off-setting program with environmental allies.

In other convention news, Tony Clarke from the Green Economy Network headlined a discussion of how public sector jobs can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. CUPE also committed to working towards an equitable green economy with new policy statements in a section called "Protect the planet" in Strategic Directions 2015-2017. Resolutions were adopted to encourage greater environmental education and to promote green jobs that cut greenhouse gases, preserve fresh public water, and keep our air clean.



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EnviroAction is CUPE national's environmental newsletter.

For more information: enviro@cupe.ca