

CUTTING CONVENTION CARBON



CUPE's national environment policy calls on our union to cut greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. We know that when we get together as trade unionists we have an impact on the environment. Climate change, waste, deteriorated water and air quality, and many other environmental issues are critically important to all CUPE members. CUPE's National Convention includes an environmental program to reduce carbon pollution. We have improved how we do union business but there are still further steps we can make to cut back on the greenhouse gas emissions and waste from convention.

Here are suggestions for lowering your carbon footprint at convention and travelling to and from convention.

Getting there and getting home

- Car-pool with other delegates from your local or city if you're within driving distance from Toronto. If you're driving, advertise via your local's website, email contacts, and networking groups that you could drive others to and from convention. The average fuel consumption for cars and light duty trucks in Canada is 8.6 L per 100 km, and burning each litre of gasoline produces 2.3kg of CO₂. The actual amount of CO₂ produced will depend on your vehicle, driving conditions, and mix of highway and city driving on your trip. For example, if 3,000 delegates each drive their own car an average of 500km to get to convention, that would produce approximately 300,000 kg of CO₂. But if delegates carpool, and the 3,000 delegates share 1,500 vehicles, the amount of CO₂ produced would be reduced to 150,000 kg.
- Take the bus or train rather than fly if you're located close to Toronto. Travel by train is a better environmental choice as it emits ten times less carbon dioxide as travel by airplane.

At convention

- Talk to CUPE green stewards for tips on going green at convention.
- The global plastics pollution problem is a huge issue. Eliminate using plastics at convention by, for example, choosing paper products for things like carry-out containers. Recycle all materials properly while at convention and reduce garbage, as waste disposal emits methane, a potent greenhouse gas.
- Eat local food, cut back your food waste and do not use disposable plastic containers and cutlery.
- Drink tap water, not bottled water.
- Carry and use a travel mug for drinking coffee, tea, etc.
- Walk to the convention centre from your hotel rather than taking a taxi.
- Take public transit while in Toronto.
- Minimize and conserve your electricity use. Turn computers, cell phones, handheld devices and other electronic devices off when not in use.
- Unplug re-chargers for these devices when they are not in use. Re-chargers use "idle power" when plugged in, which means they drain, use and waste electricity simply by being plugged into an outlet.
- Turn off lights and appliances in your hotel room when not in use.
- Conserve heating and cooling energy in your hotel room by turning the heat down and the cooling off when you're not in your hotel room.

These are a few steps for our union to take to lessen the climate-damaging impact of our work together at convention. While we value the opportunity to get together as a union, we must act responsibly and cut carbon pollution where we can.