



JOINT DECLARATION

ENVIRONMENT: A call for inspiring, rallying, effective public action

Sustainable development, climate change, energy transition: Quebecers know that these issues are real and that the stakes are very high. And they want action—fast, effective action.

Over the years, numerous studies, reports, policies and action plans have been formulated and implemented. With the support of all political parties, the government has enacted laws and created organizations whose missions converge and complement one another. With the public clearly sensitive to environmental challenges on one side and the government studying the problems on the other, there is clearly a broad consensus on the need for urgent action.

And yet, in areas as crucial as greenhouse gas emissions reduction and water management, despite the considerable efforts, the desired outcomes have not materialized.

We believe that these difficulties are chiefly due to the absence of a coherent, far-reaching governmental organization having the power to deploy a vision, to plan and coordinate actions, and to measure results.

With the approaching provincial election, we consider it a matter of urgency that political parties acknowledge this state of affairs and make a commitment to rework the governmental approach to environmental issues, in line with the principles set out in this declaration.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, call on all political parties of Québec to make a commitment, in the run-up to the October 2018 election, to rethink all government institutions and actions as soon as the new session of the National Assembly begins, with the aim of ensuring that environmental challenges and our climate commitments are taken into account and become an integral part of Québec's economic and social transition strategy.

TO ACHIEVE THIS END, this new governance must be founded on a revised sustainable development act that applies to the whole of society. This governance must be based on the following principles:

THE PRINCIPLE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The drive towards environmental goals and targets must be underpinned by a long-term, coherent, rallying, far-sighted vision that orients and guides the planning of government action, tying environmental issues to the economic, social and cultural issues of Québec. This long-term collective vision will ensure that initiatives persist through electoral cycles.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATION

This governance must be founded on a process of social dialogue, based on consultation, information and education, ensuring that the public and civil society are continually involved in the development and implementation of strategies and action plans.

THE PRINCIPLE OF COORDINATION

The scale of the transformation demands strong, structured interdepartmental coordination having the power to mobilize all the levers of government, including taxation, regulations, communication and education. This will ensure that the transformation of Québec that the environmental imperatives demand will be equitable and adapted to the various regions and territories.

THE PRINCIPLE OF RIGOUR

This governance must take account of the best available scientific data and, where appropriate, traditional knowledge, the knowledge of aboriginal peoples, and local knowledge systems.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Progress towards attainment of objectives must be measured by the gathering of data and by indicators, and be subject to an annual rendering of accounts. This transparent, independent evaluation process will guarantee a transformation that respects the values and objectives of Québec society.