

## We can't afford not to act

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Federal Environment Minister John Baird has painted a bleak picture of the costs to Canada of meeting our Kyoto Treaty commitments.

He warns that this would be a risky, reckless scheme that could push Canada into a recession and cost 275,000 jobs. This is one forecast, but the Stern Report paints a bleaker financial picture for economies if we don't deal with the issue, and if the climate continues to change.

Of all the options before us as a nation, and especially as members of a global village, adhering to Kyoto and reducing greenhouse gas emissions keeps us in step with much of the world, regardless of how unpalatable we find it.

And what are the costs of not moving forward? British Columbians, and particularly those involved in the forestry sector, know only too well the devastating impact that unusual weather has had on our forests over the past decade. The mountain pine beetle outbreak can be partially attributed to climate change.

Dry weather led to recent widespread forest fires in the Okanagan and elsewhere. The recent death of some cedars on Vancouver Island may have been caused by two successive years of drought. Forests have suffered unusual wind and snow damage this past winter.

Our guidelines for where to plant which species, and with seedlings from which seed zones, now need reconsideration. Even B.C.'s world-class biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification system will need serious reworking as the climatic foundation is no longer solid, and this affects forest species distribution. Climate change is already costing us, and costing us dearly.

Who truly has a long-term solution for the impacts of mountain pine beetle?

There is a cost to Canadian society if we change our lifestyle and economy quickly; there is a present cost that we are bearing that is at least partially climate related; and there is a potential cost if we do not change quickly enough. Can we afford to be wrong?

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