

Environment
Notley
downplays
federal
carbon levy
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Alberta shouldn't face problems if the federal government imposes a carbon levy because the province has already taken steps to limit greenhouse gas emissions, Premier Rachel Notley says.

"The message we have been hearing and the signalling we have been receiving, from the federal government is that their approach ... is one where the actions that have already been taken by Alberta will be considered adequate," Notley said Monday.

Federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna said over the weekend that Ottawa is prepared to impose a price on carbon on any province that can't come up with one of its own, or a cap-and-trade system.

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She also said the government will stick to existing targets for reducing carbon emissions set by the previous Conservative government, which aimed to reduce emissions 17 per cent from 2005 levels by 2020 and 30 per cent by 2030.

Although those goals have been



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criticized in the past for being inadequate, Notley said she hasn't spent much time on the issue, adding that setting such "aspirational" objectives has achieved little over the last two decades.

"If what we have through provincial governments and through the federal government is real policy change and real action that sees significant reductions in emissions, then what we can do is go back to the targets and look at how we can turn the dial on them to get more progress."

Notley spoke to reporters from New York City after discussing the challenges of energy transition during Climate Week NYC, on a panel that included U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Jonathan Pershing.

While there was "initial skepticism" about Alberta's record in this area, the audience of more than 300 people reacted warmly when she outlined the province's climate leadership plan, she said.

"I talked about the fact that it's completely possible for Alberta to reduce its emissions while remaining one of the most important oil producers on the planet," she continued.

'Real action' more important than changing targets, says premier

As part of the climate plan, the province expects to collect \$9.6 billion over the next five years from payments by large industrial greenhouse gas emitters as well as the new \$20-a-tonne carbon levy that kicks in Jan. 1.

Out of that revenue, \$3.4 billion is set aside for large renewable energy projects, transformative innovation and technology, bio-energy schemes, and plan implementation.

Economic Development Minister Deron Bilous announced Monday he's creating a task force to recommend where to spend an unspecified portion of that money earmarked for green technology and innovation.

The advisory group will outline how to invest in ways that will meet the government's climate-change objectives, what percentage of the carbon levy should go toward innovation, and how to tell whether the climate plan is succeeding.

"This is important not just because of the world-changing technologies that we can discover here in Alberta, but also because it can help us create good jobs for Albertans," Bilous said.

The task force is chaired by Gord Lambert, Suncor's retired executive advisor on sustainability and innovation, who was part of Alberta's Climate Change Advisory Panel and sits on the board of Alberta Innovates.

The other members are:

- Vic Adamowicz, vice-dean in the University of Alberta's Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences.
- Shelly Vermillion, who has spent much of her career working with First Nations communities and people from areas struggling to launch and grow businesses.
- Suzanne West, president of Imaginea Energy.
- Sara Hastings-Simon, director of the Pembina Institute's Clean Economy program in Alberta.

The group will meet next month with business, community, First Nations and other organizations in Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie and Lethbridge before filing a report to Bilous in November.

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