



# Citizens' Climate Lobby Canada

## Tips for getting lots of letters to the editor published and getting the most out of them

### WHY WRITE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (LTE)?

1. To **develop a relationship** with the **editorial staff** of your local paper and make them well aware of our solution, Canada's inadequate climate targets and the co-benefits of carbon pricing.
2. At election time, political candidates usually get interviewed and a candidate is **endorsed** by the paper.
3. To **empower** your volunteers to speak out about climate change.
4. To **practice communicating** all the connections climate change has to the many facets of our lives.
5. To get the **truth** and **hope** out about climate change in our local newspapers. The **truth** is that climate change is human caused. The **hope** is that the crisis is solvable.
6. To **brand** Carbon Fee and Dividend as a non-partisan and citizen solution to the climate crisis.
7. To **help the politicians** that are championing Carbon Fee and Dividend.
8. You truly are all **Climate Heroes**. You will empower other citizens to speak out for the climate.
9. To **showcase** local writers on your team and work towards getting a column in your local paper.
10. To **increase the likelihood** any letter to the editor supporting carbon fee and dividend gets published.

**Continuously sending well written LTEs to your local newspaper are a *stepping to securing an editorial board meeting* – which should be a goal of every CCL group in 2017.**

### BEST PRACTICES

1. Make it **personal**, not representing a group.
2. Check the paper to see if there is a **word limit**.
3. Do not abuse anything or anyone.
4. **Name drop** – complementing the author of an editorial or a paper for choosing to publish the editorial or news item and/or name drop your MP's name in the LTE.
5. Use a compelling **subject line**. Three types of letters that are compelling: **a.** Use conflict; e.g. End the climate change charade; **b.** Characters with compelling stories, e.g. Prince Charles says *business as usual is an act of suicide on a gargantuan scale*; **c.** Specifically mention an MP's name.
6. Know who you are pitching to. Is it national or local viewpoint you are appealing to? Make a local connection if you can for your local newspapers.
7. Avoid the **overuse of flowery language** and metaphors. Newspapers want news not poetry.
8. Think about your **rhetoric style** before you write to help you focus. Styles include narrative (**story telling**), argumentative (**persuasive**), expository (**explanatory**) and descriptive (**vivid imagery**).
9. **Be impeccable with your word** and only quote peer reviewed science with widespread consensus.
10. Use [CCL media releases](#) and [laser talks](#) to help you write your LTEs. In fact, we strongly encourage you to cut and paste paragraphs and then reword them to make them your own.
11. **TEAMS, MENTORS and YOUTH:** Develop an LTE team. If you have a good writer on your team, have that person draft suggested LTEs for others to edit and submit so you can increase the number of people getting letters to the editor published. Youth seem to have an easier time getting letters published – thus recruit them.

## PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor (LTE) typically are 150-200 words, meaning you are limited to 3 or 4 short paragraphs. They are the haiku of advocacy — short and sweet. Start the writing process by asking yourself the question: **What is my message and how does that relate to the article that was in the paper?**

**Opening:** In your very first sentence, cite the article that you are responding to. For example, “Your editorial Saturday questioning the existence of climate change left me quite puzzled, given that the world’s glaciers are receding at record rates.” (Note: It’s okay to challenge a view, but never be disrespectful).

**Transition to message:** You don’t have much space, so transition quickly to your message. Start by stating the problem. “If we ignore what scientists are telling us, global temperatures will rise throughout the century with dire consequences — coastal flooding, droughts, famine, extinction of species.”

**Propose a solution:** This is the meat of your message. “We must reduce the level of carbon- dioxide — the primary greenhouse gas — to a level that will avert these disastrous effects. Scientists tell us that level is 350 parts per million in the atmosphere. The most efficient and effective means to do this is to place a fee on carbon and return the revenue equally to all residents.”

**Closing the letter:** Finish up strong either by referring back to the beginning of the letter (closing the circle) or with something clever. “Policy-makers can argue all they want, but Mother Nature doesn’t argue — and she doesn’t negotiate.”

**Don’t try to say everything** in one letter. There’s no room for it and it muddies the message.

**Verification:** In addition to your name, the newspaper will want your address and phone number (not for publication) to verify your letter.

## RECENT EXAMPLES: For more examples go [HERE](#)

### CARBON FEE AND DIVIDEND

Re “[Buried government report reveals looming fiscal crisis](#)” (Anthony Furey, Jan. 5):

Debt is just as scary as climate change to me. Both of them can lead to economic upheaval and, consequently, social upheaval. The report cited “points out that government could make financially sound choices to send the numbers in more optimistic directions.” Governments have the difficult yet doable task of balancing the budget, social concerns and the environment. To protect low- and middle-income Canadians, while at the same time decreasing debt and protecting the environment, three policies the government should consider are eliminating tax havens, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, and putting a revenue neutral price on carbon pollution. The first two actions would directly inject money into government coffers. Specifically on the last point, carbon fee and dividend would be the best carbon pricing policy nationally and has been repeatedly endorsed by the Toronto Sun’s Lorrie Goldstein since 2015.

Cathy Lacroix, Toronto

### Revenue-neutral carbon price best solution

Re: "The real costs of cap and trade," Jan. 7 editorial.

Thank you for highlighting issue of poverty with carbon pricing. Half of Canadians are within \$300 a month of not being able to pay their bills. This is a serious problem. Climate change is a threat to the environment and to economy. The problem is how to balance both. We need an incrementally rising carbon price in Canada so that it is at least \$150 tonne by 2030, but we can’t burden already overburdened Canadian taxpayers. The solution is simple. We need to keep carbon pricing revenue neutral. Here in Sudbury, we host the national headquarters for the Citizens’ Climate Lobby. Its members have diligently researched and educated us. The evidence is clear. The solution is a revenue-neutral carbon price. My favourite policy is a carbon fee and dividend.

Robert McCarthy.

## Time for Canada's JFK-moon moment

Re: Canada should dream of greater things, Editorial Dec. 31

Agreed! Canada should dream of greater things. Our country's 150th birthday offers Prime Minister Trudeau an excellent opportunity to articulate both a vision for the decades ahead and a path toward realizing its goals.

The Star listed a few important challenges: a visibly fraying social structure, overlooked Indigenous peoples, and infrastructure needs. I would add one more: the rapidly changing energy sector.

In 2017, I would like our Prime Minister to deliver a speech in the same spirit as U.S. President John F. Kennedy's on sending men to the moon within a decade. I want Prime Minister Trudeau to inspire our nation to be on the leading edge of clean energy innovations, and to transition exclusively to non-carbon based energy by 2030.

It's an ambitious goal, but it could galvanize Canada's innovators and attract the world's finest to our shores. It would generate quality jobs for thousands of Canadians from coast to coast, offer economic opportunities for Indigenous communities, keep our environment clean and provide much needed focus to infrastructure development.

It would also leave Trudeau and our generation with an important legacy, one that Canada would celebrate in 2067.

Cheryl McNamara, Toronto

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that CCL's official talking points are only to be found in our [laser talks](#) and [media packages](#). The talking points of our guest speakers and even fellow LTE writers are not official talking points.

## **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:**

- 1) Send copies of published letters to the editor to your MP by email and/or social media.
- 2) Mention your MP's name in your Letters to the Editor
- 3) Keep track of your group's letters to the editor and bring hardcopies of your accumulated letters to the editor with you when you lobby your MP.
- 4) Submit Letters to the Editor to multiple papers: [RESULTS resource for linking to many papers across Canada](#)

## **SPEAK DIRECTLY TO CONSERVATIVES**

In 2014, Sun Media papers were sold to Post Media. They are still in publication and often syndicate columns across Canada that appeal to "conservatives". And most of their dailies accept 500 word LTEs!

Note Lorrie Goldstein, the former editor of the Toronto Sun and now comment editor, has repeatedly endorsed carbon fee and dividend since July 2015.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2017/01/04/on-carbon-pricing-ignorance-isntbliss>

<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/10/03/pms-carbon-pricing-scheme-means-bigger-government-not-lower-emissions>

<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/09/24/an-honest-carbon-tax>

<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/03/02/the-trudeau-notley-wynne-carbon-rip-off>

<http://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/2016/07/03/greens-have-best-carbon-pricing-plan>

<http://www.ottawasun.com/2015/07/04/elizabeth-may-means-it>

## Big Sun Media Papers Online form for LTEs

Calgary Sun	Calgary, AB	<a href="http://www.calgarysun.com/letter-to-editor">http://www.calgarysun.com/letter-to-editor</a>
Edmonton Sun	Edmonton, AB	<a href="http://www.edmontonsun.com/letter-to-editor">http://www.edmontonsun.com/letter-to-editor</a>
Ottawa Sun	Ottawa, ON	<a href="http://www.ottawasun.com/letter-to-editor">http://www.ottawasun.com/letter-to-editor</a>
Toronto Sun	Toronto, ON	<a href="http://www.torontosun.com/letter-to-editor">http://www.torontosun.com/letter-to-editor</a>
Winnipeg Sun	Winnipeg, MB	<a href="http://www.winnipegson.com/letter-to-editor">http://www.winnipegson.com/letter-to-editor</a>

## Sunmedia Community Dailies form for LTEs

Barrie Examiner	Barrie, ON	<a href="http://www.thebarrieexaminer.com/letters">http://www.thebarrieexaminer.com/letters</a>
Belleville Intelligencer	Belleville, ON	<a href="http://www.intelligencer.ca/letters">http://www.intelligencer.ca/letters</a>
Brantford Expositor	Brantford, ON	<a href="http://www.brantfordexpositor.ca/letters">http://www.brantfordexpositor.ca/letters</a>
Chatham Daily News	Chatham, ON	<a href="http://www.chathamdailynews.ca/letters">http://www.chathamdailynews.ca/letters</a>
Cornwall Standard-	Cornwall, ON	<a href="http://www.standard-freeholder.com/letters">http://www.standard-freeholder.com/letters</a>
Fort McMurray Today	Fort McMurray, AB	<a href="http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/letters">http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/letters</a>
Kingston Whig Standard	Kingston, ON	<a href="http://www.thewhig.com/letters">http://www.thewhig.com/letters</a>
London Free Press	London, ON	<a href="http://www.lfpress.com/letters">http://www.lfpress.com/letters</a>
Niagara Falls Review	Niagara Falls, ON	<a href="http://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/letters">http://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/letters</a>
North Bay Nugget	North Bay, ON	<a href="http://www.nugget.ca/letters">http://www.nugget.ca/letters</a>
Northumberland Today	Cobourg, ON	<a href="http://www.northumberlandtoday.com/letters">http://www.northumberlandtoday.com/letters</a>
Orillia Packet and Times	Orillia, ON	<a href="http://www.orilliapacket.com/letters">http://www.orilliapacket.com/letters</a>
Owen Sound Sun Times	Owen Sound, ON	<a href="http://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/letters">http://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/letters</a>
Pembroke Daily Observer	Pembroke, ON	<a href="http://www.thedailyobserver.ca/letters">http://www.thedailyobserver.ca/letters</a>
Peterborough Examiner	Peterborough, ON	<a href="http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/lette">http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/lette</a>
Sarnia Observer	Sarnia, ON	<a href="http://www.theobserver.ca/letters">http://www.theobserver.ca/letters</a>
Sault Star	Sault Ste. Marie, ON	<a href="http://www.saultstar.com/letters">http://www.saultstar.com/letters</a>
Simcoe Reformer	Simcoe, ON	<a href="http://www.simcoereformer.ca/letters">http://www.simcoereformer.ca/letters</a>
St. Catharines Standard	St. Catharines, ON	<a href="http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/letters">http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/letters</a>
St. Thomas Times-Journal	St. Thomas, ON	<a href="http://www.stthomastimesjournal.com/letters">http://www.stthomastimesjournal.com/letters</a>
Stratford Beacon Herald	Stratford, ON	<a href="http://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/letters">http://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/letters</a>
Sudbury Star	Sudbury, ON	<a href="http://www.thesudburystar.com/letters">http://www.thesudburystar.com/letters</a>
The Daily Graphic	Portage La Prairie,	<a href="http://www.portagedailygraphic.com/letters">http://www.portagedailygraphic.com/letters</a>
The Daily Herald Tribune	Grande Prairie, AB	<a href="http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/letters">http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/letters</a>
The Daily Miner and News	Kenora, ON	<a href="http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/lette">http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/lette</a>
The Recorder and Times	Brockville, ON	<a href="http://www.recorder.ca/letters">http://www.recorder.ca/letters</a>
Timmins Daily Press	Timmins, ON	<a href="http://www.timminspress.com/letters">http://www.timminspress.com/letters</a>
Welland Tribune	Welland, ON	<a href="http://www.wellandtribune.ca/letters">http://www.wellandtribune.ca/letters</a>
Woodstock Sentinel Review	Woodstock, ON	<a href="http://www.woodstocksentinelreview.com/letter">http://www.woodstocksentinelreview.com/letter</a>