

NET-ZERO IN CANADA: The Road Ahead

► What does “net-zero” mean?

In 2021, Canada created a law that sets a goal for the country to reach “net-zero” emissions by 2050. **Net-zero** means the total amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted into the Earth’s atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed—so there is no overall increase.

To reach net-zero, countries, businesses, and people can reduce emissions by:

- Using cleaner energy sources like wind or solar
- Making buildings, homes, and machines more energy-efficient
- Changing how goods are made and transported

Some emissions are hard to remove completely, so they can be offset or balanced by:

- Planting trees that absorb carbon dioxide
- Restoring wetlands or other natural areas
- Using technology to capture carbon from the air or point sources

Net-zero does NOT mean zero emissions—it means outgoing emissions are compensated.

A factory can emit 100 tonnes of CO₂ but also remove 100 tonnes with trees or carbon capture technology—and still be net-zero.

► Where do Canada’s GHG emissions come from?

Canada is the 11th largest GHG emitter in the world, producing approximately 700 megatonnes of CO₂ equivalents each year—about 1.4% of the global total. Businesses in the oil, gas and transportation sectors make up more than half of those emissions. We as individuals also contribute through our daily activities (e.g., driving gas-powered cars, heating our homes, and buying products), which rely on those sectors, particularly for fuel.

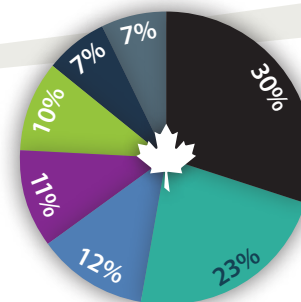
► Where do we fit in?

When businesses act, it can have a big effect on all of us: cleaner air in cities, lower climate risks, and a future where sustainable choices—like renewable energy or low-carbon products—are more available. It also means that as consumers and future workers, you are part of a system that can create change. When you buy a new phone, eat imported food, or take a plane trip, you’re contributing to the emissions from the companies that produce and transport those goods. Choosing lower-carbon options or supporting sustainable products can help reduce the impact.

► Now, ask yourself:

- Who should be most responsible for reducing emissions—businesses, governments, or individuals? Why?
- If a company says it is “net-zero,” what questions would you ask to check if that is really true?
- How do your own actions—like what you buy or how you travel—connect to emissions from businesses?
- How can you influence businesses and governments to take stronger action on emissions?

EMISSIONS BY SECTOR (2023):



Oil & gas
 Transportation
 Buildings
 Heavy industry (e.g., mining, smelting)
 Agriculture
 Electricity
 Waste & others (e.g., construction, coal production)



CANADA'S NET-ZERO CHALLENGE
 More than 300 businesses have taken up the Challenge!