



“As the founder of a youth-run organization, I’ve been able to witness first hand the power of young people when they unite as one voice behind an issue facing our world. Lights Out Canada is a shining example of this power— proof positive of what young people can accomplish for our society and for the issues we care about. Hope is burning bright in our collective dream to solve the problems created by global warming and, indeed, all the issues facing our world.”

-D.SIMON JACKSON
Founder and Executive Director, Spirit Bear Youth Coalition
spiritbearyouth.org

Lesson Plan and Event Guide

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What is Lights Out Canada?

lightsoutcanada.org
lightsoutcanada@gmail.com

“Turn off the
lights & switch
on education
about global
warming”

Lights Out Canada is an annual event during which schools across the country turn off their lights and spend the day engaging with climate change awareness and action. Through Lights Out, participants:

- Engage with the science of climate change, why it is occurring and its consequences.
- Consider how to change everyday habits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Identify opportunities to green schools, homes and communities.
- Are empowered to act on these opportunities, lead more sustainable lifestyles and model positive change.

We provide comprehensive lesson plans, step-by-step participation guides, and posters in order to make Lights Out Canada a success in participating schools. These materials are available for free download on our website. By increasing awareness and encouraging discussion, active participants will make a conscious effort to curb their energy use, both at school and at home.

OUR LESSON PLANS DETAIL:

- What is climate change?
- Why is it occurring?
- Why is it a problem?
- How can I make a difference?

Over 1.5 million students have participated in Lights Out since 2005. The event is held annually on or around April 22nd (or the day that would work best for your school).

Lights Out Canada was launched by a high school student on Vancouver Island in 2005 and is run on a volunteer basis for youth, by youth. The Lights Out team coordinates the project because climate change is not a far off concept, it is happening now, and its effects are being felt today. Ice in the Arctic is melting. Ocean levels are on the rise, and changing climates have contributed

to the extreme weather felt around the world. The repercussions of growing greenhouse gas emissions will be one of the greatest, if not the most prominent, issues that our generation will face. Lights Out Canada will not stop global warming. It will, however, give students foundational tools to understand the challenges we face and that we all need to take action to preserve our country, and our planet, for future generations.

Event Guide

Action Plan for Administrators

The Lights Out Team would like to thank you for your leadership on sustainability and on empowering your students to affect positive change. We have included step-by-step instructions for how to make Lights Out Canada a success at your school.

- Read the Lights Out Canada “Project Summary” under “About” on our website: www.lightsoutcanada.org. If you have any questions about the project check out our FAQ page on the website or email the Lights Out Team at: lightsoutcanada@gmail.com.
- At the next staff meeting, discuss issues that you might encounter and contact the Lights Out team if we can help you address any challenges you foresee. Consider how to raise awareness about the event within the student body.
- Make sure that April 22nd (Lights Out day) is not in conflict with any scheduled events at your school. Lights will be out in all participating schools simultaneously; however, we will not exclude any school if there is a conflict of timing and a leeway of a week or so is completely reasonable.
- Contact other schools in the district and get them involved in a district-wide Lights Out day!
- Fill out and distribute a customizable press release for schools under “Downloads” on our website. The media loves stories of positive change and a phone call to the local newspaper is often all it takes. Let us know if you do receive media attention, so that we can feature you on our website!
- Pass along the Lights Out summary to your school’s environmental club and encourage students to give presentations at staff meetings, to help advertise the event and get involved in its organization.
- Take pictures on the Lights Out day and email them to lightsoutcanada@gmail.com, tweet them to @LightsOutCanada or Instagram them and tag @Lights Out Canada so that we can repost and feature them on our website!
- When the day arrives, make announcements to further notify students of the event, and take pride in your role in combating, and raising awareness about, global warming.

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Action Plan for Students

Follow these steps to make Lights Out Canada a success at your school! For more ideas about activities to promote in the lead-up to Lights Out, check out The Centre for Green School's "11 Ways to Green Your School" blog.¹

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NOW Read through the "Project Summary". Visit: www.lightsoutcanada.org for more information and downloads. If you have any further questions about the project, email the Lights Out Team at lightsoutcanada@gmail.com.

Meet with administrators and a teacher who you think would be interested in helping you with the project (perhaps your Leadership or Student Council facilitator). Bring the "Steps for Teachers" and "Steps for Administrators" pages.

Today is better than tomorrow! Start planning the event right away. Below is a timeline of organizational milestones to plan for.

**UP UNTIL
APRIL 22nd** Once you have discussed the project with your principal and received permission, register your school on www.lightsoutcanada.org. We will accept registrations up until the Lights Out day, however, to ensure that we're able to email lesson plans to teachers in advance, register as early as possible.

**MID-
FEBRUARY:** Take the project idea to your school's leadership class and student council. Ask other groups to help you put up posters and promote the event.

**LATE-
FEBRUARY:** Present Lights Out Canada at a staff meeting, or ask your teacher liaison or principal to let all of the teachers know about the project. An easy way to do this would be to present the information on the Lights Out "Project Summary".

**1st week of
APRIL:** Put up the Lights Out posters. Ask permission from your teacher to use the school's photocopier or print off the Lights Out posters from www.lightsoutcanada.org (under "Downloads"). If possible, please use recycled paper and save the poster for future Lights Out events or be sure to recycle them.

**2nd week of
APRIL:** Ask permission from your liaison teacher to photocopy and distribute the lesson plans at least two weeks in advance to teachers that request hard copies. Make announcements reminding the teachers that is where they are located. NOTE: The lesson plans are to be run through at the beginning of the Lights Out Day, so save paper and only distribute them to teachers that will have classes that morning. Don't forget to photocopy on both sides and use recycled paper if possible.

**3rd week of
APRIL:** Make announcements on the PA or website to let your school know Lights Out is coming up. Include a blurb such as: "Lights Out Canada – On April 22nd, our school will be participating in Lights Out Canada. Get ready to turn off the lights and switch on education about climate change!"

¹ <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/green-building-program-sub/learn-about-green-building/11-ways-to-green-your-school.html>

Ask your teachers if you can have 3 minutes at the beginning of each class to remind people of the event and why your school is participating. If you are enthusiastic, your peers will be too! Email us and we will provide you with copies of the presentations we use.

APRIL 22nd Turn off the lights! Take pictures that show us how your school marked the day and let us know how it went!

Action Plan for Teachers

You are part of a network of thousands of teachers across the country that are helping to preserve our planet for future generations. Thank you for your support; Lights Out would not be possible without you.

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ASAP Read the Project Summary and Lesson Plan.

When reading the lesson plan, remember that it is just a guide. If you have a different idea of how you would like to present the information to you class please use your discretion.

ONGOING Encourage your students to make tangible commitments to reduce their ecological footprints. Earth Day Canada has a interactive and comprehensive program through which individuals and schools can do so: <http://www.earthday.ca/campaigns>

If you know of a student or student group that would be interested in representing the Lights Out team in your school, let us know at [lightsoutcanada@gmail.com!](mailto:lightsoutcanada@gmail.com)

BE ENTHUSIASTIC Please help us convey our excitement about the event to your students. Although global warming is a serious issue with dire consequences, we want our peers to be excited about the possibility of change and for them to translate this excitement into action.

LATE-FEBRUARY Having students, administration, staff and teachers on the same page is key to a successful event. Please attend the meeting that will be set-up by your student liaison.

EARLY APRIL Bring up Lights Out at your staff meeting. Ask your colleagues to share what they are planning for the Lights Out day. For access to a wide range of lesson plans that go into detail on climate change and its myriad impacts register on www.greenlearning.ca and visit their Climate Change Resource Centre.

APRIL 22nd Turn out the lights, go through the lesson plan, take pictures of how your class is celebrating Lights Out and send them to us so that we can feature them on our website and social media!

Teacher's Lesson Plan

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Please go over these concepts and brainstorming activities with your class at the beginning of the Lights Out day, April 22nd.

OVERVIEW

Students will learn about global warming, its effects, and what they can do to make a difference. They will then share the ideas with their parents and start making small changes that will add up to make a big difference.

If you would like a more detailed presentation of the international consensus on climate change, please read the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The [Summary for Policymakers](#) is available [here](#).²

SUBJECTS:

SCIENCES

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change compiles and reviews the cutting edge of climate change research from around the world and releases summary reports to policy-makers. It is considered the authority on reliable climate change research. Its 5th Assessment Report was released in 2013. Amongst the major impacts of climate change that it discusses are:

- increased incidence or magnitude of extreme high sea level change
- fewer cold days and nights, increased frequency and duration of heat waves
- increased frequency, duration and intensity of heavy precipitation events as well as drought and cyclones

The consequences of climate change also include, but are not limited to:

- changing temperatures & effects on marine ecosystems and terrestrial wildlife
- damaging effects on biodiversity
- water scarcity in communities
- increase in the spread of such diseases as Malaria

SCIENCE ACTIVITY IDEAS AND LESSON PLANS

- NASA Global Climate Change Resources— <http://climate.nasa.gov/esw2010/educationalActivities>
- Science Buddies Environmental Science Fair Project Ideas: <http://www.sciencebuddies.org/science-fair-projects/Intro-Environmental-Science.shtml> (See more science activity ideas on page 12)

HUMANITIES

You could discuss how climate change will impact:

- Transportation (and therefore trade).

² http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1/docs/WGIAR5_SPM_brochure_en.pdf

- Marginalized and low-income communities whom have least contributed to the problem and will yet be disproportionately adversely affected.
- The need to restrict the consumption of oil and the impacts thereof on developing nations that are dependant on oil for industrialization. This can also be tied in with the concept of “Peak Oil”. (Visit this link for background information on the concept of “Peak Oil”³)
- Economies of countries that are dependant on agriculture and how climate change will impact crop yield in these places.

The Stern Report is an excellent source of the economic impacts of climate change. A summary of the Stern Report can be found here.⁴

NOTE: “It will cost 1% of world GDP to reduce our emissions to a more sustainable level now, or 5-20% of world GDP in the next 100 years.” – STERN REPORT

FRENCH

- Climate change vocabulary games, such as crosswords, bingo, word searches (This website has a list of French climate related words⁵)
- Make sustainability posters in French encouraging students, staff, teachers and parents not to idle cars, to recycle, compost, turn off lights when not in use, etc.

CLIMATE CHANGE BACKGROUNDER

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 8-12

TIME: 45 MINUTES – 1 HOUR

(For our elementary level plans, please see the “Downloads” section of www.lightsoutcanada.org)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (DISCUSS):

- What is Global Warming?
- Why is it happening?
- Why is it a problem?
- How can you make a difference?

ANSWERS:

WHAT IS GLOBAL WARMING?

- Global warming is a gradual increase in temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere. It is the primary cause of climate change today.
- Climate Change, according to the United Nations “refers to a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity”⁶ that results in changes in the Earth’s atmosphere beyond those due to natural variability in climate over time.

³ <http://energybulletin.net/primer>

⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/oct/30/economy.uk>

⁵ <http://memorize.com/le-rechauffement-climatique-vocabulaire/muvaraxe>

⁶ http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/2536.php

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- The Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) that are considered most responsible for global warming are Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O), and Methane (CH₄). For more detailed information on GHGs, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/>

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

- When fossil fuels are combusted, their emissions produce GHGs. Deforestation, industrial processes (like cement production) and agricultural processes (relating to livestock, fertilizers and changes in land-use) are other sources of GHGs resulting from human practices. The GHGs become trapped in Earth's atmosphere. The sun's light enters the atmosphere and turns Earth into a virtual greenhouse, increasing its average temperature. A certain concentration of greenhouse gases is necessary to have temperatures conducive to life on earth; however, these concentrations have reached unprecedented levels since the 1970s and are continuing to rise. It should be noted that the increase in temperature is not uniform; the greatest increases will be seen at the poles. Some ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to changes in climate: tundra, boreal forests, mountain regions, Mediterranean climates, tropical rainforests, areas on the coast, and marine ecosystems.
- If you encounter climate change deniers, here is a great GRIST series that delves into “[How to talk to a Climate Skeptic](#)”.⁷

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

It is a problem because it is having, on net, negative impacts on life on earth; from microscopic organisms, to human life. The gradual heating of the atmosphere is likely⁸ to cause:

- An increase in acidification of oceans as a result of larger amounts of CO₂ dissolving into the water. This is detrimental to marine life like coral reefs and many types of plankton
- Rising oceanic temperatures which results in changes in the quantity and range of marine life that are sensitive to these changes (algae, plankton, and fish)
- Ice at the polar caps to melt and ocean levels to rise
- Hot days and nights, heat waves, and drought to become more frequent.
- An increase in the frequency and severity of weather events like storms
- An increase in heat-related deaths (especially in Europe)
- Increase in the spread of disease by vectors (disease-carrying insects)
- Disturbances in agriculture due to changing seasonal patterns and an increase in pests (such as the pine beetle in BC). Agricultural changes could compromise food security (the availability of food) significantly. “[Food Security and Climate Change](#)”⁹ explains this.
- Changes in the water cycle (which may affect the availability of safe drinking water)
- Widespread habitat impacts that will result in the extinction of many species that are unable to adapt to the changes to their habitats.

⁷ <http://grist.org/series/skeptics/>

⁸ IPCC “Climate Change 2007 Synthesis Report” URL: http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf, Likely meaning greater than 66% probability to occur according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

⁹ http://www.livelihoods.org/hot_topics/FoodSecurity/luc-pages-spring2002.pdf

Arctic communities in the North are being severely impacted by climate change. It is already compromising their ability to hunt the traditional foods they have relied upon for millennia, to travel on the ice as it becomes increasingly unpredictable, and their very ability to live in the Arctic. Visit the [Arctic Council's website](#)¹⁰ for more information.

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Check out www.350.org for more information on CO₂ concentration levels in the atmosphere and the consequences thereof.

Did you know that 9 out of 10 of the hottest years on record have occurred since 2000?¹¹

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

To achieve significant change, it is widely recognized that there will need to be effective government policies to reduce emissions (for more information, see the report by M.K. Jaccard prepared for the [David Suzuki Foundation on Carbon Pricing](#)¹² or this [report from the Pembina Institute](#)¹³. However, 25% of Canada's GHG emissions come from households and transportation that individuals have the power to reduce, and that doesn't include the role of our demand in driving agricultural production or landfill use.¹⁴April

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Changing habits and thinking of the environment when making consumer choices is paramount. These reductions can add up to have a large difference: both environmental and financial. Moreover, your reductions will combine with the efforts of many.

Global Effects: Global warming will affect all people, on every continent and in every country. However, in developing nations with dense populations, climate change will have even more fatal consequences. With the privilege of living in Canada also comes a responsibility to reduce the impact our consumption has on other countries.

REGIONAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN CANADA

Read about the effects specific to your region. Or have students represent a province/territory in groups and present the impacts in their region to the rest of the class. (From the Government of Canada's "Teacher's Guide for Climate Change Poster Series")

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- increase in drought and risk of forest fires like those in the interior.
- larger populations of pine beetles because temperatures are warm enough for them to survive in winter.
- coastal communities will be threatened by rising sea levels.

¹⁰ <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/>

¹¹Plait, Phil. (2014) "2013 Is the Fourth Hottest Year on Record." Slate. URL: http://www.slate.com/blogs/bad_astronomy/2014/01/22/global_warming_2013_ties_for_fourth_hottest_year_on_record.html

¹² http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/2008/Pricing_Carbon_saving_green_eng.pdf

¹³ <http://climate.pembina.org/pub/1584>

¹⁴ Partington, P.J. (2010) "Canada's main sources of greenhouse gas emissions" Pembina Institute. URL: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/1966>

- migration of tree populations and fish (to colder water) northwards
- economic impacts: damage caused by flooding and storms, higher insurance rates.

PRAIRIE PROVINCES¹⁵

- increase in drought and its intensity
- increase in flooding and extreme rainfall events
- lower level of moisture in the soil (impacting agriculture)

ONTARIO

- increase in heat waves (and an increase in heat-stress related illness)
- a longer growing season, but with less moisture available in the soil
- lowered level of the Great Lakes—up to one meter less by 2050
- spread of disease from warmer climates

QUEBEC

- increase in the frequency and severity of storms
- spread of mould and bacteria as a result of increased humidity and moisture
- a compromised ability to produce maple syrup and the resulting economic impacts
- melted permafrost in the north of the province

ATLANTIC PROVINCES

- widespread flooding
- damage to agriculture and electricity generation as storms increase in intensity
- migration of temperate forests northwards as well as wind damage to trees
- increase in pest populations like Gypsy Moths
- damage to energy production which will have economic impacts regarding the US market

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND YUKON

- lives of caribou being endangered
- increase in parasites and pests where temperatures were previously too cold
- increase in agriculture further north
- endangered lives of polar bears and seals as the ice will break off earlier in the season
- increase in coastal erosion
- alteration in the carbon cycle as natural stores of carbon and methane in peat are released into the atmosphere as the permafrost melts, creating a situation of positive feedback

NUNAVUT

- adverse effects for those who live in the north; disturbing communities, travel, hunting, fishing
- extinction of species
- higher seas levels, coastal erosion and melting of inland glaciers, causing mass
- flooding and damage to eco-systems

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¹⁵ Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative. (2007) “Climate Change Impacts on Canada’s Prairie Provinces: A Summary of our State of Knowledge”. URL: http://www.parc.ca/pdf/research_publications/summary_docs/SD2008-01.pdf

HOW CAN I MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT?

AT SCHOOL

Energy Saving Tips and Other In-School Initiatives:

- Turn off lights when you aren't using a room, or use occupancy sensors (which will ensure that lights turn off when no motion is detected after several minutes)
- Use fluorescents instead of incandescent bulbs. They can last 6- 10 times longer and produce much more light rather than heat making them more efficient. For access to GreenLearning's EnerAction program, register at www.greenlearning.ca and check out their free teacher materials and lesson plans.
- Make your school an "idle-free" zone. Encourage parents, visitors, and school bus drivers to refrain from spending idle-time with their cars running
- Use refunds from bottle returns-- they can be used as in-school fundraisers
- Make sure that the photocopy and fax machines are set in stand-by or "energy save" mode
- Program your thermostats to lower the temperature when the school is empty. You can reduce your emissions by up to 99 kg just by turning down a heater by 3 degrees and layering up.
- If your school has locker rooms equipped with showers, make sure that low flow shower heads have been installed
- In your school's Home Economics labs, check for the "energy star" ensuring that they are of superior energy efficiency
- Make sure computers are turned off at night and have timed screen saving methods in place when computers aren't in use during the day
- Have all windows and doors checked for leaks—heat may be lost during the winter months if entrances are not properly insulated
- If your school is decorated with lights during the holiday season, use LED lights
- If there is outdoor lighting (in places that receive large amounts of sunshine during the day), consider using solar power lights
- Make sure that all facets are "drip-free"—every drop adds up!
- Set up "light monitors" (students) to make sure the lights are turned off in empty rooms.

AT HOME

- Be vigilant about turning off the lights, computer, stereo, television when you leave a room
Replace light bulbs with energy efficient halogens or fluorescents.
- Recycle all cans, bottles, plastics, and tetra-packs
- Compost organic food waste
- Reduce your meat consumption—the livestock production contributes nearly 1/5 of global GHG emissions¹⁶.
- Recycle paper, clothes, and school materials—anything that is salvageable reduces the emissions from the manufacture and transport of materials.
- Unplug appliances when not in use—even when turned off some appliance still uptake electricity.
- Wash your clothes in cold water; water heaters account for 20% of household electricity.

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¹⁶Bittman, Mark. (2008). "Rethinking the Meat Guzzler," The New York Times. URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/weekinreview/27bittman.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

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AT PLAY

Energy-Saving Tips for Extracurricular Activities

- Carpool to your activities with your friends, or better yet walk or ride your bike!
- Use a reusable water bottle.
- Going to the gym? Why not get a head-start on your workout by riding your bike there instead of driving?
- Can your activity take place outdoors? The benefits of playing outside are many – fresh air, Vitamin D from the sun, no need for electricity.
- Buy your exercise clothing second-hand.

IN MY COMMUNITY

Transportation accounts for 48% of major air pollutants. Reduce this number and take the bus, metro, or sky-train to get to your destination! Public transport is vital to reducing the number of cars on the road and consequently the emissions they produce. If you have to drive somewhere, make sure that your car: has fully inflated tires, isn't carrying any unnecessary weight, and organize carpools to take as many people with as few cars to your destination.

Equally important is to make your city “pedestrian friendly”. Ask your city to:

- Host car-free street markets
- Create bike paths
- Make sure that pedestrian crossings are easily accessible.
- Have walk to school/work events

Email the Lights Out Team for more initiative ideas and check out these great sites!:

- saferoutestoschool.ca
- toolsofchange.com/en/case-studies/detail/135
- biketoschoolmetrovan.ca/
- cycleto.ca/the-bike-to-school-project

IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

WHAT CAN YOUR SCHOOL DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE YEAR-ROUND?

- Write letters to elected officials calling for definitive action on climate change!
- Calculate the amount of energy you are saving by turning off the lights in your classroom and your school using the [EnerAction Carbon Calculator](#).
- [Send an eCard](#) about energy to a local politician, your family, or classmates¹⁷ and read the powerful messages sent by others.
- Teaching Grade 4 -7? Check out the [EnerAction Conservation Lessons and Activities](#).¹⁸
- Have students brainstorm making lists of areas of consumption (in your school) that need to be improved (e.g. lights being left on, excessive garbage)

¹⁷ <http://ecards.greenlearning.ca/>

¹⁸ <http://www.greenlearning.ca/eneraction>

- Examine each “environmentally unfriendly” area and come up with a plausible solution. For example, you could assign “light monitors” in your classroom to make sure lights are always turned off when not absolutely necessary.
- Hold a mock environmental summit (similar to a model UN). Check out this site: serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/roleplaying/examples/globwarm.html
- Do something hands-on! There are global warming science experiments available on these websites:
 - ku-prism.org/resources/polar/warminglessons.html
 - juliantrubin.com/fairprojects/environment/globalwarming.html
 - pbslearningmedia.org/resource/tdc02.sci.life.eco.greenhouse/global-warming-and-the-greenhouse-effect/
 - bbc.co.uk/sn/climateexperiment/

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- climatecrisis.net
- theplastiki.com
- bcsea.org/learn/resources-for-educators
- earthday.ca/pub/resources/top10.php

If you have any questions about this event or would like more information, please email the Lights Out Team at: lightsoutcanada@gmail.com

“WHAT MAKES LIGHTS OUT CANADA SO EXCITING IS THAT IT CATALYZES ACTION AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE, HELPING TO MAKE THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE MORE ACCESSIBLE AND PERSONAL. ENERGY CONSERVATION HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN PREVENTING CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THIS CAMPAIGN BRINGS THAT MESSAGE HOME.”

- MORAG CARTER, Director of the Climate Change Program, David Suzuki Foundation

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