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Guests: Kathryn Harrison (University of British Columbia) and Andrea Olive (University of Toronto)

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The environmental policy process in Canada is complicated. With its division of powers between provinces and the federal government, Canada's federalist structure has tended to serve as a barrier to achieving consistent nation-wide environmental policy change. In this episode, Dr. Kathryn Harrison and Dr. Andrea Olive walk us through the various factors and players influencing policy development and implementation in Canada. Using carbon pricing as an example, they go into detail regarding how the federal system influences environmental policy in Canada.

Episode 6: Federalism, Party Politics and Environment

Kathryn Harrison: Nobody's in favour of a dirty environment, nobody's in favour of climate change. So everybody cares in Canada, pretty high level of acceptance of climate science, certainly compared to the U.S., but not everybody's paying attention all of the time. And also a lot of people have conflicting objectives. They care about the planet, but they want to get to work conveniently in a car. So I think for politicians, they have lots of reasons to be skeptical of polls that say, everybody wants action on climate change. Because as soon as they do something that increases prices, they're worried that they will provoke a backlash.

[00:00:49] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** So welcome everyone to the Ecopolitics Podcast. This podcast series tackles some of the big questions in the field of environmental politics for university students in Canada. And I'm Ryan Katz-Rosene from the University of Ottawa. And my cohost for the show is Peter Andr e from Carleton University, although he is not joining us for today's chat.

[00:01:11] In this episode, I'll be talking with Dr Kathryn Harrison, professor of political science at the University of British Columbia and Dr Andrea Olive, an associate professor and chair of political science at the University of Toronto Mississauga. And we're going to be talking about federalism and how that influences environmental policy in Canada, and also a related discussion on carbon pricing in the Canadian federation.

[00:01:42] So this is not necessarily the easiest topic at the moment because there's so much variation and change across Canada, both from one province to the next and from one year to the next, in terms of how provincial governments have gotten along, how they've collaborated, how they fought with each other and also how they've chosen to tackle carbon pricing in their own way.

[00:02:08] But for that reason, we're quite lucky on this episode to have Kathryn and Andrea help us break it down. They are amongst Canada's leading experts working in this area, having researched and published on this extensively and having recently collaborated on a project looking at carbon pricing across the Canadian federation, which we'll be sure to link up to on our podcast website. So before launching into the big questions, how are you guys doing? I'll start with you, Kathryn, how are you holding up during the great pandemic summer of 2020?

[00:02:43] **Kathryn Harrison:** Well, you know, I remind myself of that. I'm actually very lucky, you know, I have a secure job, secure housing, and try to cut myself slack for not getting nearly as much done as I intended. And I don't even have like baking sourdough or kids at home to explain it, I just watch too much news on TV.

[00:03:05] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** There you go. Well, I'm feeling pretty lucky too. And I was chatting with Andrea earlier and she sounded like she's also feeling pretty fortunate. So is that the case? What are you doing, Andrea?

[00:03:15] **Andrea Olive:** I am feeling extremely lucky. So while I am a professor at UTM, I have maintained a house in Saskatchewan and my husband and I have a summer home here on a small lake. So we have really just been able to enjoy - you know, Saskatchewan has so few cases, it went into reopening very quickly. And it just feels like a parallel universe when I talk to my colleagues at the University of Toronto. So I do, I feel extraordinarily lucky to be able to spend my summer here, especially this summer.

[00:03:52] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Right. And so I guess in that sense, we're kind of based across the country, although maybe not someone from out East, but that's maybe a good place to be in terms of tackling our first substantive question, which looks at how, you know, different provinces are tackling environmental policy in Canada. So we have a pretty complicated structure here, a constitutional structure, a division of powers and responsibilities between the provinces and the federal government. And we know there are some areas of shared jurisdiction and also some areas where, you know, one or the other is primarily in charge. And things get more complicated when we factor in regional politics and a whole array of political parties across the political spectrum. And we have premiers that sometimes see eye to eye with each other, and sometimes they totally don't get along with the prime minister. And so I guess my first question, and I guess it is a big one and starting with Kathryn, as you've looked at this

for quite some time, is, you know, What do you think are some of the ways that this complex constitutional structure shapes, or maybe constrains and limits how environmental challenges get tackled in Canada particularly compared to other types of constitutional structures?

[00:05:18] **Kathryn Harrison:** Oh, that is a big question. I mean, I think of federalism as a really complicated machine, and it's got all kinds of different levers and in the Canadian case, it's got 11 different steering wheels, 10 provinces and the federal government. And that can be great if they all want to go in the same direction. So you've got, you know, some provinces steering in the areas that they know best and the feds, and they're all going in the same direction. If that's not the case, it's a lot more complicated and all bets are off. So I think sometimes federalism can be very positive for environmental protection and sometimes very negative.

[00:05:58] And just to give a few examples of different dynamics from climate change policy, which I know we'll talk about more. Some of the good news is that you can have provinces that are willing to lead, that are willing to stick their necks out and take action when no one else is. And so we saw Ontario phase out coal fired power fairly early. And that still, I think the single measure that's had the biggest impact. You see with 10 provinces, you've got more possibilities for innovation. So we've see innovative policies emerge, like low carbon fuel standards actually initially came from U.S. federalism, but migrated to Canada through BC, revenue neutral carbon taxes, and then sometimes diffusion of those really good ideas to other provinces and then to the federal government.

[00:06:51] So Ontario's coal phase-out is now national. Carbon pricing is now national. but on the other hand, some of the negative things are - Canada's a big country and there's such different economies in different provinces and the more carbon-intensive provinces aren't always following the leaders. They don't want to follow the leaders. They want to develop their fossil fuel resources. so, and we also on top of that have this norm. Now it's not a constitutional requirement. It's a norm in the Canadian federation of seeking consensus, federal-provincial consensus. And that's meant is that on many occasions, provinces that are most resistant to taking action on climate change have vetoed national or, you know, Canada-wide action. So for, I don't know, at least 15 years, the province of Alberta blocked the idea of a national emissions trading program. For a long time, the province of Ontario, which used to rely even more on auto manufacturing vetoed tighter tailpipe standards for motor vehicles. So, and sometimes they just all fight with each other, which is what they're doing with carbon taxes. And I'm sure we'll talk lots more about that. So a mixed bag.

[00:08:10] Right.

[00:08:11] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** But would you say that there's something about the structure that kind of slows down environmental, you know, slows down action or progress on environment in Canada specifically, just because of that layer of complexity? You kind of implied, we need all the stars to align. And there have been moments where that seemed to be the case. Maybe, you know, 2016 seemed to be a moment when the premiers and the prime minister got together and he came up with this Pan-Canadian Framework. Then it kind of fell apart, to a certain extent when new provincial governments came to power.

[00:08:49] And so I guess I wonder, like, is based on international comparisons, like, is this something that we just have to live with, that this is something that really holds back and slows down action, or is this maybe seen in a positive light that there's, you know, these checks and balances on ensuring that we're not going too quickly down a particular path?

[00:09:14] **Kathryn Harrison:** I would say on balance, federalism has been a hindrance to Canada's response to climate change and lots of other environmental issues too. You know, it's not only a hindrance. There have been these positive moments. and I think the fact that Canada has Canada-wide carbon pricing is one of those positive things.

[00:09:38] But in general, federalism has slowed us down. And when we have moved forward, it's often been with some kind of ugly political deals. So approval of a pipeline in exchange for carbon pricing, you know, expanding Canada's fossil fuel exports in exchange for a fairly modest carbon price on our own emissions.

[00:10:00] So yeah, I think that federalism has been a problem and that's because of the diversity of the federation and the provinces like Saskatchewan and Alberta. In per capita terms, the carbon emissions per person would be the highest in the world if they were countries. And on the other hand we've got Quebec, which has hydro power, has relied a lot on natural gas and would be kind of equivalent to a Western European relative, relatively low carbon intensity industrialized country.

[00:10:34] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** All right. So it seems like there's a lot of wheeling and dealing that has to happen. and maybe there are some forms of politics that can kind of encourage that process more effectively than others. Maybe that's a good opportunity to turn to a question I have for Andrea,

because Andrea, you've written quite a bit about the environmental policy process in Canada as part of your book. And, you know, just like the Federalist structure, the process of forming environmental policy in Canada is quite multifaceted, it's quite complex. And it's, you know, it's not just a bunch of policy makers in the capital making the rules. so I guess one of the things I wanted to get you to talk about for students is, what are some of the other actors that are shaping the environmental policy process in Canada that students should be aware of and how do they do that? How do they play a role in shaping the development of environmental policy? How do they get their foot in the door? Do some groups have more power than others? Do some actors know how to make this work?

[00:11:48] **Andrea Olive:** Okay, that's a great question. although I will just say that your, a federalism question is always the final exam question in my environmental policy course. And I like that I didn't have to answer it. So they don't know, like, what would I have said.

[00:12:08] So who is shaping public policy? So we generally think, sure. It's the executive branch, right? It's the prime minister and the cabinet are primarily in charge, but actually that's not the whole story, right, there are all these other actors that you sort of allude to. And I mean, just to name a couple, it would be sort of like Indigenous peoples, and other citizens business and industry can be huge, sometimes too huge, NGOs, political parties, municipal governments can be - in the climate world, that's a really big actor- and then of course the courts would also play a really significant role. I always like to have students focus on and sort of become more aware of their own role. I mean, as citizens, as voters or as people who can, you know, tweet to their Members of Parliament or something, but actually also is their role as consumers. And I think that one is often overlooked and that's like. All day, every day we make decisions about where to spend our money and it can be, you know, in the cafeteria at lunch and whatever you were deciding to buy, in a way it's like voting for that product. Would I want more of that? Do I support more of this?

[00:13:21] Because that's essentially what you're signalling. And so if you think about it that way, I think it might shift some of the decisions that you're trying to make, and that can have huge outcomes for public policy.

[00:13:34] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Yeah. Well, I mean, that opens up a whole number of questions, follow up questions. I mean, and yeah, you mentioned some groups that hadn't occurred to me just in jotting

things down beforehand, you know, in terms of municipal governments and the courts in particular which, which maybe sometimes slows things down in terms of making process.

[00:13:57] Do you think that some groups might have more access to the political process? I'm thinking here on reports we've seen in recent years about you know, the level of lobbying access that certain groups, in particular, you know, the oil and gas industry, has had in Ottawa and in some provincial governments as well. Do you see that?

[00:14:26] **Andrea Olive:** Yeah, I would say absolutely. I mean, I think some actors have more influence than others and it will depend on the issue. When it's something like climate change I would say without a doubt industry has had too big of a role. And then, it's even just simple things like, you know, contributions to electoral campaigns and how much that can vary in a federal system, you know, by province, because province will set its own sort of campaign contribution regulations. And that opens the door for all kinds of influence in different ways. And it can be not always the most democratic way to go about influencing public policy. That's allowing money to speak, right, and to speak louder than citizens.

[00:15:20] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Right. And, you know, on the flip side of that, we have seen a growing climate movement. And to a certain extent a student-driven or student or youth-led climate movement in this country. It wasn't too long ago when Greta Thunberg was visiting. And you know, there were, you know, some of the largest demonstrations and protests that we've seen in this country and students across the country, marching. Do these groups really have power or maybe we can contextualize, like what, what kind of power do they have in the process? And maybe Kathryn, maybe I'll turn that to you. Like when you see these groups coming together on the street, Does that seem like a way of an effective way of influencing the political process?

[00:16:15] **Kathryn Harrison:** I think it can be. And I was tremendously encouraged by the youth-led protests that we saw in Canada last year. And I think the moments when broad public attention has really had the most impact is when the environment in general or climate in particular have been top of mind. They have been - it's been THE issue that's been motivating a significant share of the electorate. And I think we saw that in the fall of 2019, it coincided with an election, Thunberg's visit, you know, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of Canadians in the street I think makes politicians sit up and take notice and think maybe this really is going to influence their vote more than other things. And I think

also just the youth movement has been such - they've been such a powerful voice for the injustice of climate change and the responsibility of, you know, my generation to do better. And you know, it's just, it's been very powerful and honestly, it feels good to be in the street with other people. And I think that's something we underestimate. That the spill over benefits or people of going out in the street with their kids, with their neighbours and realizing how powerful it feels as a citizen.

[00:17:47] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** So maybe I'll run that answer by Andrea and see if she agrees. I mean, do you see the youth climate movement in Canada having that degree of power in terms of offering a hopeful movement, but also just signaling to political leaders. And we live in a democracy that, you know, this is an issue that is important to Canadians and that they better take notice.

[00:18:13] **Andrea Olive:** For sure. I think the spillover effects are actually huge. I think, not just like inspiring people who are trying to make a difference to keep going and that, you know, people do believe in what it is we're trying to accomplish. I think that's really important, but even just like conversations that, you know, these young people are having with their parents and just like that knowledge gain and information flow is I think really huge. And like, you know, even if the impact isn't immediate. And I always think politicians and this system maybe discounts future voters. but that's meaningful. And I do think it's important. I think it's really important. And I don't know, I don't know how you feel about me, like quoting Taylor Swift on your podcast, but like only the young can run, right?

[00:19:03] Like, I mean, that's it. And getting young people involved in politics and really with their feet and going out there? Oh, that's huge. That's huge. And so absolutely I do. And I don't know if it's like, we can't just point and say, Well, you know, Saskatchewan still doesn't have a carbon tax, so it didn't work. I mean, it's, it's not that simple. Right. I don't think we should be looking for a quick policy flip, you know, just based on, on some climate marches. but that's not to say that the climate marches didn't matter or that they weren't important. I think that's just the wrong metric.

[00:19:44] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Well, that maybe there's an opportunity there to flip that back into a question about regionalism. You know, we all teach young Canadians and sometimes older Canadians, but usually most of our students are young Canadians and they do seem to be, on the whole, very aware of climate change. This is an issue they're going to be dealing with for the rest of their lives and they're passionate about it. And I was intrigued to see large climate marches in places like Calgary, in Edmonton and out west as well. To go back to Andrea, do you see the youth movement changing the regional

politics that we have, particularly around energy. And you know, I for one, see maybe a little bit of a generational conflict emerging in Alberta in the near term, in terms of, you know, a generation that is kind of fed up with the way things are going in terms of climate politics, and then another generation that has benefited from a strong economy and jobs in a particular industry.

[00:21:07] **Andrea Olive:** There is a large, I think, generational difference. And I can't speak to many provinces, but we did survey data in Saskatchewan back in February, so pre COVID, asking people about like a transition off oil and gas and we haven't released the data yet, but we plan to soon. I was with Emily Eaton at the University of Regina and Randy Besco at the University of Toronto Mississauga, and like when you break it down by age, it's interesting. Because young people feel really differently than people like over the age of 45 or over the age of 40, there is a real divide there and, a real concern for climate change is bigger, but also just support for solar energy and wind energy and for transitioning completely off fossil fuel production as well as consumption. And we see those numbers like generally, age is what matters a lot of the time and sometimes even more than political parties. So that's really fascinating.

[00:22:13] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Yeah, it'll be interesting to see how that changes things in the future, particularly in terms of, you know, Canadian, regional politics and also, you know, provincial politics itself in provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan.

[00:22:28] So I'm thinking we should turn now to the big theme here about carbon pricing in the Canadian Federation. and maybe just to start off by taking a step back and just talking about, you know, just working out for students what exactly is happening out there in terms of this federally mandated price on carbon, a so-called carbon tax, as it's often referred to. So this is part of the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change. But we also have some provinces that have said, no, we don't want a carbon tax. So maybe I'll turn this to Kathryn to try and explain this a little bit for us. How is it that we have different means of pricing carbon in different places across Canada?

[00:23:20] **Kathryn Harrison:** Oh, it's a bit complicated story of how we got here. As I mentioned, sometimes some provinces lead and we saw a few provinces that were leading going into the 2015 election. BC had adopted a revenue-neutral carbon tax in 2008, Quebec had joined with California in an emissions trading scheme, Ontario had just joined that. I guess they were planning to join that emissions trading scene. They did so briefly in, I think, 2018. And Alberta had kind of this two-step process where

they had applied to a large oil sector emissions, but then an NDP government elected in Alberta had expanded that program and also created a carbon tax on households.

[00:24:16] So we had these four big provinces, which accounted for most of the Canadian population that already had or were about to have carbon pricing and then the federal Liberals going into that election announced a kind of two-part policy. They promised that they would put a price on carbon and that was a centrepiece of their climate action plan. But they also said they would do it in partnership with the provinces. So they could have just said, we're going to do it Canada-wide. But they said, we're going to build on the actions of provinces. And I think that that was not a constitutional decision, it was a political decision that it meant that the idea of a national carbon price was less threatening to people in some regions that might've been worried about what the impact might be on their economy. And of course it was facilitated by not giving a lot of specifics, what the price would be, who it would apply to, whether there would be a backstop. And then initially the federal government, the new federal government, the Liberals that were elected were getting along pretty well with the provinces. By late December 2017, the federal government and all provinces but Saskatchewan agreed to the Pan-Canadian Framework, which was a plan with a lot of different parts. Some of them to be undertaken by the provinces, some by the federal government. The key part of that was that each province would undertake carbon pricing itself, but if they didn't, the federal government would step in.

[00:25:45] So things were looking pretty good until a great unraveling in 2018. There was a change in government in Ontario and the new conservative government withdrew from the emissions trading scheme that the Liberals had taken Ontario into. New Brunswick's proposed carbon pricing scheme was rejected by the federal government. There was a change. There was an election in Alberta. There was a plan in Manitoba that also didn't pass muster and they withdrew. So suddenly the federal government had to act on its commitment, which was to establish a tax and dividend scheme in any province that didn't meet the federal government's benchmark as it's called, which was, you had to have similar coverage to BC's carbon tax, and you had to start with a relatively low carbon price moving up to \$50 per tonne by 2022, or have an emissions trading scheme that would deliver equivalent reductions as would have been achieved by a carbon tax, and that's a complicated thing to enforce, which we can get into.

[00:27:00] But what ended up happening is we had some provinces that continued on their way. BC had its carbon tax. Quebec had emissions trading scheme, a few others adopted their own carbon taxes.

Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, put in place a bit of an unusual emissions trading scheme. And then the federal government imposed a federal carbon tax in five provinces. Since then a couple of others have adopted their own carbon taxes and the feds have withdrawn. That's happened in New Brunswick and I think it may have happened this month in Manitoba as well.

[00:27:42] So we've got a real patchwork of provincial carbon taxes, federal carbon tax and two very different emissions trading schemes at the provincial level.

[00:27:53] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Right, well, yeah, patchwork indeed, but maybe, maybe. And that's a fantastic recap of that complexity that, that patchwork and that complexity across the country.

[00:28:04] Can you also briefly differentiate for us the difference between a carbon tax and a carbon cap and trade system, or you would refer to it as an emissions trading scheme? It seems like these are the two main forms of carbon pricing. Are there others? What is the gist of, the logic of how those are intended to actually address climate change?

[00:28:33] **Kathryn Harrison:** Sure. so I think one thing I would say at the outset is that any actions that we take that are going to be meaningful to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions will have an implicit carbon price. So it's just a question of how high that price is and how visible it is. So two forms of explicit and intentional carbon pricing, are indeed cap and trade or emissions trading and a carbon tax.

[00:29:00] What a carbon tax does, is it specifies the price, and then consumers and industry respond to that price signal by conserving energy, by switching to cleaner fuels, by innovating and coming up with technologies to reduce emissions. So the higher the price, the more they will do, but there's uncertainty about what the resulting emissions will be at any given price. The alternative approach is to specify the emissions, put a cap on emissions and allocate those emissions by different means. Sometimes they're just handed out as a fraction of historical emissions to existing polluters, sometimes they're auctioned off. But you know what the emissions are going to be but you don't know what the resulting price would be. So people get their emissions allocation and then they're allowed to buy and sell them. In competitive markets the two are equivalent, but the uncertainty is different. With a price, you're not initially sure what the emissions will be, with a cap and trade scheme, you're not initially sure what the price will be, and that's what makes it hard to reconcile the two and to say it's up to provinces. To choose whichever approach they want, want them to be equivalent is that you could do that if you had

perfect information about every polluter's control costs and emissions, but we don't. And so it's a bit challenging to figure out how to make the two equivalent.

[00:30:42] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** And then just one quick followup, before I turn back to Andrea. Is the carbon tax actually working, and maybe we have some contradictory evidence coming out of the case of British Columbia. and I'm curious to ask you, because you're familiar with this, but, you know, it's one thing to say that the tax reduced emissions on a per-capita basis. Did it actually reduce the province's emissions in net terms and from what I understand the answer to the latter question is no, it didn't. That emissions actually did increase overall, but that the emissions per capita did decrease. And so it did have that influencing pressure on a commercial activity and consumer activity. Maybe I'm wrong about that, but that was what I had understood. But do you think that a carbon tax in theory works, and is it working in practice in the Canadian context?

[00:31:47] **Kathryn Harrison:** I think it works in practice. In theory, yes and also we've got a growing number of studies that it works in practice. I do think we have tended to establish. Because carbon taxes are so controversial, citizens don't like taxes of any sort and political parties, opposition parties have taken advantage of that to raise a lot of questions. The implication has been that we have established a higher bar for whether carbon taxes work than regulations. So for instance, we regulate emissions from motor vehicles. Those regulations have worked to reduce emissions from individual motor vehicles. But historically the number of cars on the road have increased and emissions for motor vehicles for a period of a couple of decades were going up. People don't say regulation doesn't work, what they say is, We need stricter measures. And I think there's a similar thing going on with carbon taxes. BC carbon tax, because it was adopted in 2008 and because it was a textbook example of a carbon tax. It applied the same price to all sources. There weren't a lot of special carve-outs for powerful industries that we've seen in other sectors. It made it an easy one for economists to study. And we now have a growing number of peer reviewed studies that have found that the BC carbon tax reduced emissions below what they would have been. They encouraged people to buy cleaner vehicles. They consumed less home heating fuels than they would have otherwise. They consumed less gasoline than they would have otherwise. And it had apparently a small positive effect on the economy rather than a negative one. So we know that emissions were lower than they would have been otherwise. But the price, we also know that the price was not high enough to drive emissions down to what's needed to address climate change. And that's true with lots of regulations as well. It's a tool that can work. It's economically

effective, but it's not going to work - we're not going to achieve our goals, even for the 2030 Paris agreement target, let alone net zero, at \$50 per tonne. If we do it by regulation, that can work too, but it will cost us more than \$50 per tonne.

[00:34:10] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Right so that aspect of, you know - it's much harder to see the cost when you're talking about it in the form of a regulation or even the cost of an unregulated untaxed system in terms of the cost of climate change. Maybe I can, because you, you know, you were talking about the political challenges to carbon taxes. The idea that there are these political lightning rods and this along with another aspect of the carbon tax, it being the federally mandated carbon tax, which I believe is revenue neutral, those two facets seem to be points of contention for some of our colleagues in the field.

[00:35:00] And so. If I can turn it over to Andrea. Is a climate tax enough. What kinds of other things do we need to be thinking about? Or do we need to be thinking about other types of tools, to use the word that the Kathryn used, to tackle climate change?

[00:35:20] **Andrea Olive:** Yeah. So I mean, the Pan-Canadian Framework actually is filled with a whole bunch of other things and always we sort of ever talk about is the carbon tax.

[00:35:28] And you see even if - like, so the carbon tax is a wedge issue. There's no doubt about it. And some of us try and use the language of price on carbon as though that makes it somehow different, or that I guess signals both a carbon tax and cap and trade. So it's a catch all, but yeah, the word 'tax', people are not keen on that. They just don't want to pay more for anything. They don't want to be taxed, but then I think the other thing is - and so it's directly tied to this revenue neutral thing. So if people don't want to be taxed, then isn't the answer to just give them the money back. And then this like leaves people with their heads spinning. Like then why are you taxing them in the first place? If you're just going to give them the money back, it sounds insane. And then it's also, I think the other sort of layer to that is the distribution of wealth across the provinces are moving wealth from the West to the federal government or perceptions that that might be happening. And a lot of sort of animosity from people in the West being suspicious of how the federal government might be using any of the revenue that would be gained from a price on carbon across the provinces. Meaning just simply that, you know, it wouldn't be in the best interest maybe of Saskatchewan to allow you know, the Trudeau government, the ability to then use that money however it wants.

[00:36:59] And so I, that sort of speaks to a mistrust and I don't want to be super cynical on your podcast, but that's sort of at times the reality of the situation. and so I do think there's a ton of room to talk about other issues that are not, that are directly related to climate change, but are not maybe as much of a lightning rod I mean, I still think conservation is a discussion worth having.

[00:37:30] So just using less is something that like, we don't tend to talk a lot about. but just using less energy, I think is a conversation that's still worthwhile. And maybe that seems silly in the grand scheme of things, but I do think that that message still needs to be out there. And then there's, you know, alternative energy. If you look at a place like North Dakota, and I might be the only person in the world who talks about North Dakota on a regular basis, because nobody looks at North Dakota, but, but the interesting thing about them is they've decided to just become an energy super power. And so they're going to produce oil, but they're also going to produce wind. And they're going to produce a ton of wind. They're going to be one of the largest wind producers in the United States. And it's - that discussion is not about climate change. They're not talking about doing wind energy for climate change for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Yes, those are great spill over effects. And I'm sure that makes environmentalists happy. But that's not why North Dakota is doing it, or that's at least not how they're talking about it. And so that's, I think that's a pathway for Saskatchewan for the New Democratic Party here to stop talking about the carbon tax and instead start talking about all of our solar energy, all of our wind energy, and really like embracing that. and maybe that's never going to be enough either, but all of these little things combined might lead us somewhere worthwhile.

[00:39:00] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** So, one of the questions I was going to ask was, Who gets it right when it comes to carbon pricing. And I'm defining who broadly there, whether it's a province, that's getting it right, or maybe a particular researcher or writer or analyst. And you had outlined, you know, North Dakota as a jurisdiction that's maybe having some important discussions, not so much about how do we tax and price carbon, but about, you know, just creating lots of energy, becoming an energy superpower, and also identified people who are asking questions about consumption, conservation, how do we consume less? Kathryn, when you are asked, who gets it right, what jurisdictions or people or writers come to mind in terms of getting this discussion about how to price carbon effectively, or how to reduce emissions effectively?

[00:39:58] **Kathryn Harrison:** You know, it's funny because Canadians have been bathing in this toxic debate about our carbon tax for, you know, well for years, but certainly since 2018 and the rest of the

world loves it. And he's so excited about what Canada is doing, because I think there's a difference between unfortunately, Good policy and good politics. I think the federal government's tax and dividend program is well designed. It applies broadly. I'm a fan of giving the money back, although I think it would have been better if they sent quarterly checks rather than having a much less visible tax credit in the annual tax rebate. it's not the only thing. I think it's really important that, I mean, we're in such an emergency situation now that we need to throw a lot of things at this issue. So it needs to be complemented by other policy tools. And I think Canada has done a lot of that. You know, I think the tax and dividends scheme is a really good one.

[00:41:07] I think we can't kid ourselves that in two respects that it's limited. One of them is that shifting from from dirty energy to clean energy alone is not going to solve Canada's challenge because we need something else to export. A lot of our emissions, but also a lot of our economy associated with producing fossil fuels that we send somewhere else and that get burned somewhere else. So just switching our own energy consumption from fossil fuels to wind and hydro, even to natural gas, isn't going to replace the hole in our economy if fossil fuels are phased out. And the other aspect of it, and then this is really embedded in. Canada's carbon pricing scheme, is that because the fossil fuels that we export get burned somewhere else, they're not our responsibility under the Paris agreement. So we've got a great carbon pricing scheme, but it was predicated on expanding production of bitumen from the tar sands for export via a new pipeline. So there's definitely, I think, a negative underside to that policy.

[00:42:30] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** So you used in there the word emergency, and I think Andrea would agree, we are facing a client emergency. And we know also that Canada's record on climate action is perhaps not as good as it could be. But that said -

[00:42:50] **Kathryn Harrison:** [Kathryn] That's an understatement

[00:42:51] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Understatement of the year. But we also have some indication that, you know, Canada has a strong reputation, at least in word, and that things you know, that the Pan-Canadian Framework in particular was a jolt in the arm so to speak of tackling this issue more wholeheartedly, more seriously than perhaps our country has done, this country has done in the past. So my final question to you, both, starting with Andrea is, you know, are you hopeful about the future. Are you hopeful about, in Canada's ability to turn things around, to genuinely you know, peak in terms of annual emissions and to start to see a reduction of of greenhouse gases?

[00:43:42] **Andrea Olive:** Yeah, I, so, yes, I think I'm just inclined to be hopeful in general. And in part it's from things like the youth movement and just increased attention. I mean, arguably happening way too slowly, but it is happening. I mean, we're using the word emergency and that is - it can be really frustrating, you know, normally when there's an emergency or like when there's a fire, you are telling people that they need to run and take cover. And those that can need to grab buckets and start working on putting it out. Right. And, we're not, I mean, we're using the word, but that's not actually what people are doing, right. And so I feel like it leads to sort of that issue fatigue, like, Oh, I've been hearing about this emergency for the last 15 years, right? Like, it's not an emergency. And I'm starting to feel that way about biodiversity too, right. We've been talking about biodiversity loss as being an emergency as well, and one directly related to climate change. And so it can feel exhausting. and it can feel like nothing's ever changing, but I mean, I think even listening to Kathryn talk about everything that's happened with the Pan-Canadian framework and everything, you know, dating back to BC's 2008. yes, it's been 12 years and it's not been enough, but it can happen. and, when Trudeau's government was first elected it happened kind of quickly with the Pan Canadian Framework. I mean, one of the geniuses or great, I don't know, travesties of federalism is that the federal government is the one who signs international treaties, and then the provinces are the ones who are required to actually implement the steps necessary to get us there.

[00:45:36] And so the federal government can keep showing up. And, you know, these UN summits and keep agreeing to things and then come back and say to the provinces, Look, I made this promise. We have to do it. And, and that's an interesting way to govern, right. And maybe it maybe a frustrating one for students of Canadian federalism, but that's the way it goes.

[00:45:59] The problem I think, and I don't want to talk about this, has also been with Donald Trump's government and with what's happened in the United States. And I feel like there's been a lot of momentum lost. I think if Hillary Clinton would have won the election, I think things would have looked very different. I think Trudeau and Clinton would have sent North America down a different path. And that's, you know, I don't want to drag that out too far, but I do think the influence of the United States has been huge. And in a very negative way. And so it's been difficult for Canada to keep focused and keep doing what we're doing and pretending like it matters when the United States has been so reluctant. And not just reluctant, but like absolutely like dead weight, dragging the world back. And that's the really frustrating part to me. And there's not a lot that Canada can do about that.

[00:47:03] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Hmm. Well, we'll save some tough questions for the U.S. context and Trump for our discussion with Matt and Steven, which is coming up in a few weeks, but thank you for that.

[00:47:16] And, Kathryn, do you feel hopeful when you're looking at the near term future?

[00:47:22] **Kathryn Harrison:** I'm a mixed bag on that one. You know, I draw a distinction between optimism and hope and it's not original. Rebecca Solnit is an American writer who's written a lot about hope in a dark time. Optimism is sort of, what do you think will happen, you know, do I think good things are happening or not, and hope is what could happen. I think as a scholar, Am I optimistic? Ehh, you know, there's a lot of reasons for concern right now. I think if there's a challenge to the federal carbon pricing regime that the Supreme court will hear, if that fails, I think the federal government could pivot and do other things, but will have lost a few more years and that will be very troubling.

[00:48:10] I'm worried about the fact that we're still not having a serious conversation in this country about winding down our dependence on oil. We're still planning to expand that, even as we adopt some good climate policies, I'm concerned that unlike in many other countries, particularly in Western Europe, action, effective policies on climate change are still a partisan issue and we've still got one party that honestly, in the federal election, the Conservatives were saying a lot of things that were simply untrue. and were pretending that their policy would achieve similar goals at lower costs. And no academics were supporting that. In fact, many were speaking out against it. So we still have this partisan divide.

[00:48:57] And I'm worried about COVID sort of taking the wind out of the sails of the youth climate movement. It's redirected all this attention. That said, the reason I'm still hopeful, I choose to be hopeful that we can do better. And I think the fact that Canada has adopted a number of really good policies. Carbon pricing is one of them, but lots of other things are happening at the federal and provincial level. They put in place the tools. They need to adjust the stringency of them, but that can be done. They've got the architecture in place. Canada kept going, despite Donald Trump's withdrawal. And we haven't done that in the past, we backed off. The Paris process is still proceeding, Canada's a constructive part of that. So I am still hopeful that we can do a whole lot better than we've done before. And in some respects we're going in the right direction.

[00:49:56] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** There you go. So, listening students take note that we can still be hopeful while perhaps also making sure that we're critical and we're concerned about - we're not forgetting

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about the challenges ahead of us and not being unrealistic about them. But that, you know, the time is now. The time is now to act.

[00:50:19] So thank you guys so much. I think we should probably leave it there, but I really appreciate your time and both of you sharing your thoughts and your wisdom with us, and really happy that you broke down these complex issues, like the federalist structure. And the crazy patchwork of carbon pricing in the Canadian federation in a digestible way.

[00:50:42] So that wraps up this episode of the Ecopolitics Podcast. Of course, don't forget to check out some of the other episodes in the series at our website, which is ecopoliticspodcast.ca. And thanks again for listening and we'll catch you next time.