

## The Ecopolitics Podcast - S01E13: Corporate Sustainability in Canada

<https://www.ecopoliticspodcast.ca/episode-13-corporate-sustainability-in-canada-2/>

Hosts: Peter Andrée (Carleton University) and Ryan Katz-Rosene (University of Ottawa)

Guest: Rory MacAlpine (Maple Leaf Foods)

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*In this episode we get real about corporate social responsibility with Rory MacAlpine, Senior VP Government and International Relations at Maple Leaf Foods. How do we know if corporations like Maple Leaf are dedicated to true environmental sustainability or simply greenwashing to sell their products? At Maple Leaf Foods, they've put quite a few strategies in place to reach their goal of being the most sustainable protein company on earth. But is it enough? You be the judge!*

### Episode 13: Corporate Sustainability in Canada

**Rory McAlpine:** *I think there's been an evolution. Maybe when we started in this journey of CSR and sustainability, it was all premised on the notion. Oh, there's a commercial opportunity. If I do, if you will, some greenwashing I can gain market share. I can raise my price. And so on. Well, maybe that worked for a while, but it sure doesn't take you very far today. And I say that because consumers are much smarter, they are looking into the validity of such claims and actions. The idea that you can greenwash your way into success, just doesn't cut it.*

[00:00:33] **Peter Andrée:** Welcome to the Ecopolitics Podcast, a podcast series that tackle some of the big questions in the field of environmental politics for university students in Canada. I'm Peter Andrée from Carleton University co-host of the show, along with Dr Ryan Katz-Rosene from the University of Ottawa. How are you doing today, Ryan?

[00:00:52] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** I'm doing well. Thanks, Peter. I'm a little concerned about wildfires in the Northwest US.. where my 93 year old grandmother lives, but I'm keeping an eye out for that and hoping for the best. But otherwise I'm happy to be joining both of you for this episode on corporate social responsibility.

[00:01:09] **Peter Andrée:** Great. Well, I hope your grandmother is well through all of this. In this episode, we're going to be talking about the concept and the practice of corporate social responsibility with Rory MacAlpine, Senior Vice President, Government and Industry Relations with Maple Leaf Foods. What responsibility do large private sector companies have when it comes to reducing our collective environmental footprint? What does social, environmental and economic sustainability mean to leaders like Rory in Canada's corporate sector?

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[00:01:40] We increasingly hear companies, through their advertisements, press releases and social media feeds, telling us that they want to be part of the solution to the environmental challenges of our time. But are companies making real changes in how they do business in response to issues like climate change, the over exploitation of soils or animal welfare, or are they just telling us what they think we want to hear while going on with business as usual? We're going to devote two episodes to this question, starting with our first one today, with, in our conversation with Rory McAlpine of Maple Leaf Foods.

[00:02:13] Maple Leaf Foods is a major Canadian processed meat company that has had to weather some significant storms over the past 12 years. The biggest of these was a listeriosis outbreak in one of their Toronto plants in 2008, that left 22 people who ate foods produced at that plant dead from food poisoning.

[00:02:31] Most recently they've been dealing with the challenge of managing meat packing plants and places like Brandon, Manitoba in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with workplace health and safety questions really coming to the forefront. Both of these events and much in between forced the company to think carefully about what it means to be a responsible corporate citizen in the 2000s. We're going to talk about these kinds of issues and how the company sees them with Rory McAlpine today.

[00:02:58] Rory's role with Maple Leaf Foods is to work with the government and other industry players on public policy programs, regulatory affairs, and trade. He's also had a role in setting up the Maple Leaf Centre for Food Security, which I'm sure he'll talk with us a bit about today before working for Maple Leaf Foods, Rory served as Deputy Minister in British Columbia's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries. He's also worked for the federal government as executive director and director general of the International Trade Policy Directorate, as Director of Grains in the oil seed division, and deputy director of multilateral trade with Sgriculture and AgriFood Canada. So we're lucky to have Rory with this diverse background with us today and particularly so because in just the next month or two, he's going to be retiring from Maple Leaf Foods.

[00:03:48] Welcome to the Ecopolitics Podcast, Rory. Thanks for joining us today to talk about this important topic.

[00:03:54] **Rory McAlpine:** Thank you, Peter. It's great to be here.

[00:03:55] **Peter Andréé:** Super. Well let's just get right into it. This idea of corporate social responsibility. What does it mean for Maple Leaf Foods? Another phrase listeners may be familiar with is the idea of public trust. What do these concepts mean for you and how Maple Leaf Foods does business?

[00:04:12] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, thanks for the question, Peter. I would say that we've actually evolved a bit beyond those terms and concepts to the concept of shared value, which I think in the business literature is increasingly identified as the highest level of commitment to outcomes that serve the interests of the business, but as well, the many stakeholders of the business from the employees to customers, to citizens broadly.

[00:04:41] So you know, we've built that platform. We've actually got a position that's rather I suppose quite far out there - it literally is to be the most sustainable protein company on earth. And it's built on this notion of shared value and to be a purpose-driven company so that we build action into our purpose, that's very well-defined, very well tracked and carefully measured, year in and year out. So, that's where we've evolved and where we want to continue to drive better outcomes for all of our employees, our customers, and the communities in which we operate.

[00:05:25] **Peter Andréé:** That's a really interesting idea, Rory, that for your company, it's the idea of shared value across the stakeholders, your consumers, and those who work with the company and those who run the company. and I'd love to hear more about that as we move forward today.

[00:05:42] Now in the introduction, I mentioned that Maple Leaf has gone through quite a transformation since the listeriosis outbreak of 2008, in which a number of people lost their lives eating contaminated meat product from the plant. That was a deeply sad and troubling moment for the Canadian food industry in general and for your company in particular. Since then the company seems to be doing another number of things differently. What's this transformation been about, and how has it changed the way the company does business from the perspective of the sustainability of your company?

[00:06:16] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, thank you, Peter. Well, there's no question 2008 listeriosis was a terrible tragedy, first and foremost for the victims that, you know, that were impacted by this contamination. And it's frankly a legacy that we live with day in and day out. The accountability for that can't be denied. It was a failure of food safety control in that plant. And I guess what I would say is that

when you think about social responsibility for a food company, nothing can be more important than the health and safety of those that eat the food. So food safety has to be absolutely number one. And we failed in that instance, but it was really a realization, I think, that we had to take better care of our program, our processes, our accountabilities, everything to do with food safety in the business.

[00:07:15] And so it was a pivot. It was a point of recognizing that we had to be different. And I would say it grew from there, then of course, to embrace a number of other externalities that are associated with food manufacturing, food production. Related to health and safety broadly, to animal care, to environmental protection, to community engagement. So it forged an awareness of that kind of an accountability.

[00:07:42] And we've come a long way since then, particularly in food safety where, you know, I would say we've got a leadership position in best practice and science-based food safety management that is unparalleled. And something we're obviously deeply committed to.

[00:07:58] **Peter Andréé:** As you say, there was a, there was a big pivot after the listeriosis crisis and tragedy of 2008. Now, as you said earlier on, the direction of the company is to be the most sustainable protein company on earth. So can you just tell us a little bit about what that mission looks like for Maple Leaf Foods right now?

[00:08:19] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, it's a position that relates to everything from the nature of the products we produce to, how they're consumed and how they are produced, you know, how they are sourced and everything that goes into the supply chain to bring food to the table. Protein of course, is the center of it. And we are a meat company, but we're also a plant protein company. We've increasingly invested in that area. But when we talk about livestock and meat production, we realize of course there are some significant environmental impacts associated with animal production and meat processing. And there are issues around meat consumption as part of our positioning on sustainability and protein. We, I think perhaps, maybe even still today are perhaps the only meat company that actually makes the point that meat is best consumed in moderation. We recognize that there are negative health consequences to excessive meat consumption, but protein is king. Protein is critical to the diets of everyone in the world. And we need to find a path to sustainably producing protein for human wellbeing. Be that from plant or animal sources. So it kind of starts there.

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[00:09:39] But the concept of sustainability broadly in this context is about social, environmental and economic sustainability. And in our platform, we captured that in basically four pillars. They are: better food, better care, better communities, and better planet. So, the better food is around that idea of high quality safe protein. Better care is very focused on animal care, animal welfare, but it also covers the health and safety issues that I mentioned, both for our employees and for the food that we manufacture. Better communities of course is about the the engagement and the support we give to the wellbeing of the communities in which we operate. And generally in Canada, particularly as you highlighted at the outset, in relation to the issue of food security, and our commitment to action through the Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security.

[00:10:42] And the final pillar is better planet, which is of course about the environmental impacts. And particularly recently our commitment to be carbon neutral. So that's the scope of it, and it tries to be all encompassing and it's very evidence-based, it's built around commitments that are measurable. And reported actually under the global system, the GRI, the global system of measuring sustainability. Is the basis on which we report and publicly release a sustainability report every year.

[00:11:18] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Thanks, Rory. I'm gonna jump in here. And it's really interesting to hear about that mission of, you know, wanting to be the most sustainable protein company on earth. And here's some of the different ways that you're incorporating and defining sustainability at the operational level.

[00:11:37] I want to ask a bit more of a theoretical question about that, because it seems like for, you know, large companies and corporations in this day and age, having some type of mission statement like that, about sustainability or some type of sustainability strategy and a public one, isn't an option. It's a requirement, right? It's a requirement in the sort of contemporary marketplace. Whereas maybe not so long ago, that was not a requirement or it was at least more rare that we had companies making these kinds of statements about wanting to be 'the most sustainable'. And now it's fairly common. Some of my students, quite a few of my students are fairly critical about what they see as essentially greenwashing to put it bluntly.

[00:12:31] So my question to you is, you know, how do you respond to that critical viewpoint? The idea that any kind of profit driven system isn't conducive to genuine sustainability regardless of the intentions, the good intentions of the corporate sector?

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[00:12:47] **Rory McAlpine:** Yeah. Well maybe two or three things to respond to that. One, I would emphasize the evidence on which the statement is made and the actions are judged. So that becomes really important. You have to have an objective third party measurement of outcomes that relate to the commitments and sustainability. And as I mentioned, we do that through the GRI reporting framework and through participation in international organizations for sustainability, where best practice is shared and defined. So, you know, the evidence - I mentioned previously carbon neutral, well, that is based on the science-based targets. We're one of only 290 companies globally to embrace the science-based targets as the basis for absolute measurement of scope one, two, and three emissions and backing up the claim of carbon neutrality. So, so that would be the first thing.

[00:13:48] The second thing I think I would say is that the idea that you can greenwash your way into success just doesn't cut it. Like we, for example, in our risk reporting, like as a publicly traded company, your compliance on sustainability now becomes material to your reporting to the securities regulator. It becomes very relevant to the major investors that are investing. It has become now - just as an example, we are now achieving as a reality, some better rates on our debt financing because the financial institutions will recognize that a company that is committed to sustainability actually is at less risk of business failure. Therefore, they will give us a better rate on debt financing. So these kinds of things are starting to kick in, in the way businesses you know, have to think of themselves. Particularly as I say, if you're a publicly traded business such as ours.

[00:14:50] And maybe the last thing I would just emphasize is we would find it very hard today in 2020 to recruit bright young people for the future of our business, without this kind of action and commitment. Because you know, they are citizens too, and they want to work for a company that is real about these actions. And so we think we're there, and we have to be. Again to be competitive in the marketplace for labour, talent. You've got to be there.

[00:15:18] So I think this is the circumstance that we're in now, and it's all for the better. Maybe the final point too, is if anybody doubts that this isn't real in large corporations. Well, I guess I would ask what's the alternative? Like in today's world, do we really believe that these major social economic and environmental actions are being adequately solved by governments? I think we all know they aren't, right? There's a huge problem in executing substantive change on these major global issues, if left only in the hands of governments. And therefore the idea of putting support into the corporate sector, driving these outcomes. I think we're seeing outcomes occur, frankly, faster and with more substantive

outcome than many other ways governments are trying to move the needle, whether it's on climate change or any number of other things.

[00:16:12] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Well, there's quite a lot there in your answer. And I will pick up on the theme of risk and sort of a broader definition of sustainability and how that contributes to mitigating risk for the corporate sector in a minute. But I want to pick up on one other thing you had mentioned earlier that Maple Leaf is one of the only companies that suggests, you know, Meat should be eaten in moderation.

[00:16:39] And that's an interesting concept to me, that a company would be suggesting, Okay, maybe don't go gangbusters on our product, you know, this is a special thing. I'm wondering if you can elaborate a little bit about that in the context of - you know, in many of these episodes where we're asking people about the political relationship between consumption-based environmental initiatives and production-based focus, like looking at regulation in the corporate sector. But I was intrigued that you mentioned this idea of moderation. So wondering if you can elaborate a little bit about that.

[00:17:19] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, it is more on the idea of consumption-based moderation in the sense that we know. I mean, all based on a nutrition analysis and understanding of dietary patterns. We understand a lot about that in Canada and generally, you know, in terms of different population groups, demographics, and there are indications of certain health outcomes that can be adversely affected by excessive consumption of fat, salt, sugar. I mean, all of these things are very relevant to how you create healthier, more nutritious food and promote responsible diets.

[00:18:03] So it isn't just about, you know, this food versus that food, but how does a Canadian today achieve balance in their overall dietary intake? So, you know, dieticians know that there is balance involved here. So we believe that. That there needs to be increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. That's part of Canada's food guide. We would totally agree with that. And at the same time, we know a lot about the value of meat protein in the diet, particularly in younger adults. We know that for example, teenage girls are very often protein deficient, and they often don't consume enough high quality protein. Meat or animal products, you know, play a role in that. Similarly for older individuals, senior citizens may be deficient in protein, high quality protein, and their health suffers as a result.

[00:18:58] So anyway, all of this- not to be- I'm not the expert in health and nutrition, but it's an argument that says we need balance. We play a role as one supplier of one channel of protein or both

plant and animal, and that to be relevant, to be responsible, we have to understand the total dietary needs and risks associated with consumption of different foods in different quantities. So that's all it is really. And it's, maybe you could say, of course we can say that because we aren't just a meat company, other companies that would be solely in the space of meat, clearly props are likely not too pleased with us making that kind of a statement. But we think it aligns very well with science. It aligns very well with Health Canada's guidance on healthy eating in Canada.

[00:19:47] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Yeah. I mean, there's certainly- a holistic view of protein is certainly welcomed and it's something I'm quite fascinated in, and I know Peter has a follow-up question about that in a second. But I did promise that I would ask you about this question of risk and sustainability in a broader sense. And I'm going to relate it to the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[00:20:11] So you know, I would suspect, but correct me if I'm wrong, that Maple Leaf is probably going through its next biggest crisis since 2008, perhaps even a bigger crisis. But I'm curious to know, you know, if you can elaborate about what the company learned from this pandemic about sustainability in the food system more broadly? And moreover, whether those efforts that were undertaken after the 2008 issue have enabled the company to become a more sustainable business, in the context of this global pandemic and food supply issues?

[00:20:50] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, good question. I would maybe answer in two ways. First to say, to comment on the actual operational impact of COVID-19 on our business. It's been challenging for sure. But we have, we've done well. Like we have been all over this well, and frankly ahead of many other food companies in all the risk mitigations we put in place in our plants in Canada and in the U.S. Meaning that to this day, we've definitely had several cases of COVID amongst employees in manufacturing operations, and to a very small extent in office settings, but never yet I don't believe we've yet been able to attribute a case to workplace transmission.

[00:21:36] We're right now managing a situation at our pork slaughter plant in Brandon, Manitoba. There's been a community outbreak that has definitely affected our employees. We've had several employees test positive. We've had to isolate, quarantine, do all of those things, but it doesn't reflect transmission in the workplace.

[00:21:56] So that's the situation operationally. I mean, it has certainly impacted in our business in terms of, for example, the closure of restaurants and food service operations had a big impact on sales in that



channel. And that's been very hard, and a lot of inventory was stuck, unable to move to sale, et cetera. So there's been those things, but broadly in terms of the food system, No question that it has hit the sector in various ways, but at the end of the day, the system has come through pretty well. I mean, we know there was hoarding. We know there were shortages in some areas at certain points, but the food supply system proved itself to be remarkably resilient, I would say.

[00:22:43] We've learned some things about the challenge when you've got a high-efficiency, low-cost, you know, just-in-time type model for producing and distributing food, that when something goes down and we know in food, in meat plants, particularly in the United States, there's been some serious disruption when plants did have to shut because of workplace transmission of COVID. So that's a challenge. There's a number of things we've learned, but I would say on balance, we've proven the system can continue to deliver food quite successfully into consumer markets.

[00:23:20] The one area though, I will point out. And this is where we do get very concerned food security. The rates of food insecurity have by some estimates doubled as a result of COVID-19. That's a result of the economic impact. The job losses, the income hit that's come upon us. And that has dramatically increased dependence on food banks and so on. So that's an area of weakness and we're very committed to find solutions to that.

[00:23:46] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** That's very interesting, I want to ask one quick follow-up before Peter gets into questions about protein, and that is. About this issue of the size of, the market share of Maple Leaf in the Canadian food system. And I think at the start of the pandemic, there was some closures of two facilities in Alberta, which I think I heard on the news was responsible for something like 70% of the country's meat supply.

[00:24:22] And has that factored in? Like this question of size, this question of whether there's some merit to the idea of decentralizing or downscaling or spreading out the production of the food supply. So that an outbreak in one or two plants doesn't wipe out the food supply for the entire country?

[00:24:46] **Rory McAlpine:** Yeah, well, this, that whole issue of redundancy, like what, where's the backup? And frankly, it's not just about say pandemics. You can, you can have a major strike at a plant. You can have a tornado can hit a plant, whatever. And it's true that, you know, the more we have achieved scale and efficiency to manage costs in manufacturing generally, but food in particular, that comes with a set of risks that we've discovered.

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[00:25:12] I would point out though, that. The border is wide open, like on a North American basis for meat, for the vast majority of food products, supply chains are highly integrated. And so if a plant goes down in Alberta, the opportunity is there very quickly to meet the demands of the major retail chains from any number of other U.S. and some other Canadian sources. So it's not, it's not like we live on an island when it comes to food security, if you will, globally. I mean, there's tremendous amount of global movement of food. And again, we can argue about that in terms of sustainability and so on, but at least in terms of assurance of supply, and managing of food availability - and affordability. Let's remember like, you know, it's fine to say, We want a system that's highly niche and locally oriented and so on, but at the end of the day, there's a large segment of our population that, you know, need low cost food, or need sources of food that are, that is affordable. And that comes with maybe certain negatives around scale and so on and how food is produced. But it's not a black or white kind of situation.

[00:26:25] So I, you know, I think that issue of scale is important, but I would also argue that by virtue of having best-in-class scale facilities, again, some of the investment we as a company have made. Like over a billion and a half dollars of investment in the last 10 years in food manufacturing in Canada has improved our food safety performance. It's improved our sustainability, like the energy input, all the things that you can achieve through modernization comes with this kind of investment. And ultimately I think that is good for the planet and for consumers.

[00:27:05] **Peter Andrée:** Rory, this has been a really interesting conversation and some of what you're raising, I think will lead to some great discussion among the listeners. I just have a last question to ask you about protein. You talked about how Maple Leaf sees that it wants to be the most sustainable protein company in the world. And the future of protein is a big topic these days. With the climate change impacts of meat production of major concern, the rise of vegetable-based proteins and then there are environmental questions associated with the sustainability of those products. And soon we expect to have lab grown meats on the market. And again, there are questions around the sustainability of those inputs. So it's not always clear cut, which of these is the better option.

[00:27:53] But I just wonder how your company is looking at these questions and charting out its future in terms of the challenges and opportunities related to the different types of protein that are available and their diverse environmental and social impacts.

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[00:28:11] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, you mentioned cell cultured meat. It's not something we've jumped into. We've done a bit of investigation of it. It's, you know, there's a lot of question marks still around it, scalability and cost, and consumer acceptance, right, at the end of the day. We do believe that plant protein is a very real trend. In fact, through the pandemic actually sales of plant protein foods continued to accelerate year over year. So it kind of feels like people are getting more into the idea. And of course there's been tremendous innovation in these product categories to produce products that are far more tasty and you know, enjoyable, I would say for even, you know, the traditional meat eater or flexitarian. So we're seeing a really, you know, interesting trend there.

[00:29:04] But, you know, I guess very much the focus for us these days is on climate change and the impact of our business on greenhouse gas pollution. So if there's one sort of unifying position or imperative, I think that we feel acutely on this journey to being the most sustainable protein company on earth, it is that. And that's a huge one, right? It's very, it's very challenging, but we've, I mean, we started the journey first with a commitment to reduce our environmental impact by half by 2025. So whether that was energy, water, waste. And so we continue to track all of those outcomes.

[00:29:48] But then we went a step further to carbon neutrality in 2019, which is, which involves a whole bunch of action on the variables we can control, within our operations and our fuel consumption and utilization, but we of course have got there with, in addition, the purchase of offset credits to offset our greenhouse gas outputs. That is the future. Like the idea that ultimately you could literally through your supply chain, not just in terms of what you directly control, but all the inputs you purchase right through to the livestock that you may contract from an independent farmer, you can actually measure and mitigate the carbon footprint of all of that, is the huge challenge that we face. We face globally and we feel that very much as a business. So that's really where the focus is.

[00:30:44] And, and it's tough. I mean, it's one of these things where the first steps are relatively easy. You can find mitigation savings. We, you know, we did things like convert all of the lighting in our plants to LED lights. Positive immediate benefit, but at a certain point, you know, just replacing the light bulbs doesn't cut it. You've got to go much deeper into regenerative agriculture, into biogas production from hog manure. All of those things is where we're at now. So that that's where the focus is. I would say for the next few years.

[00:31:15] **Peter Andréé:** So Rory. And can I just ask - and I think you've been clarifying it in the last couple of points you made - but you're not just talking about the greenhouse gas footprint of the processing and distribution side of the industry, but you're also looking at what's happening at the production side, on the farms and in the feedlots and the greenhouse gases associated with those, with the inputs into your business?

[00:31:38] **Rory McAlpine:** Yes. So it's, you know, it's that notion of scope one, two, three. One being the greenhouse gases generated directly by your operations. The scope two being the energy - the fossil fuels, the energy sources you procure to run your business. And then scope three is all of that extended supply chain. And in agriculture that is where the real biggest impacts will be felt because it is cropping practices. It's animal raising practices. Like in our total supply chain, that is where the majority of the carbon footprint occurs. We as a business have direct ownership of about half of the hogs, for example, that go into the supply chain. So in those farming operations, we have direct control, but the other half we don't and in our poultry, we don't. So how do you incent, how do you drive, how do you compel those actions right through? But that has to be the outcome.

[00:32:33] That's the whole idea of science-based targets, right? It's about absolute, it's saying we're going to meet the Paris Accord outcomes, we've got to have absolute control of the molecules of carbon that go into the atmosphere. And just doing better in terms of the intensity of your energy utilization. No, it's about absolute. And so even as we grow as a business, if we acquire businesses, if we expand, that all now is under a hard ceiling of green, of carbon neutrality. So that's the game. Tough business, but that's the future for us.

[00:33:09] **Peter Andréé:** Well, you've given that our listeners a lot to think about today. Starting with this notion of shared value as kind of the next frontier in thinking about corporate social responsibility, to getting down into this question of measurability and accountability, to using third parties to audit companies and their suppliers to assure that what they're saying they're doing is actually what they're doing. And I also found it really interesting the way you talked about how this is good for the planet. This is good for the planet. This is good for your consumers, in terms of having them and how they feel about your product. But it also brings a financial and other benefits to your company. Whether in terms of less risk when it comes to return on debt financing, to the competitiveness for labour and wanting to build a company that young people want to work for. So I've really found it a fascinating conversation. We're about to end this up. And I just want to give you a couple of minutes where if you have any thoughts to

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share with students of ecopolitics who are trying to wrap their heads around these complex issues, like climate change and corporate social responsibility and how this all interfaces with government regulation. You know, where would you be pointing students today who are excited about these topics?

[00:34:37] **Rory McAlpine:** Well, I'd point them to our talent acquisition team because we want great, you know, bright people that care about this stuff. Whether it's in our manufacturing, in our head office, in our marketing, like, you know, the race for talent is on and that would be probably the first thing I would suggest. But I mean, basically I think it's really important for young people to engage on this stuff.

[00:35:02] And don't be, you know, don't dismiss the corporate sector as part of the solution. It has to be part of the solution to these major social things, social and environmental issues. And like I say, we need bright minds to figure the path home around reconciling the tradeoffs because there are real tough tradeoffs. There are real financial limitations to what a government can do to what a company can do. But to simply say, you know, Let's just ban meat. Let's just ban large food plants. Let's... You know, those things are idealistic. There's lots of change we can make, but we need the best minds in navigating, helping us, you know, go from A to B, find a path that's sustainable, both economically, socially, and environmentally.

[00:35:52] So we need all kinds of disciplines in that as well. It's not just food science. It's, you know, we need environmental science, we need animal science. We need all kinds of bright people involved in it. And I would argue there's no industry more exciting in that regard than the food industry, because it does bring together all of these things and at its core, the food system is so material to the future of the planet that I would think it's a great place for any young person to be thinking about a career.

[00:36:24] **Peter André:** Thanks so much Rory for your time today and sharing your thoughts with us and the listeners. And I want to end, before passing it onto Ryan, to just wish you all the best in your retirement.

[00:36:35] **Rory McAlpine:** Thank you very much.

[00:36:36] **Ryan Katz-Rosene:** Yeah. Well, I will echo Peter's best wishes for your retirement. And I also echo that the idea, you know, this is really fascinating discussion and I wish we had more time because I'd love to discuss some of these things with you further. But maybe, maybe another episode if we do a second season.

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[00:36:54] I should probably take us out though. So again, thank you very much, Rory for joining us. And this does wrap up this episode of the Ecopolitics Podcast. So for listeners out there, don't forget to check out the other episodes in our series, currently available at our website, [ecopoliticspodcast.ca](https://www.ecopoliticspodcast.ca).

[00:37:14] And don't forget to like us on social media. We're on Twitter, our handle is at [@ecopoliticsP](https://twitter.com/ecopoliticsP), capital P. And share your feedback, we'd love to hear from you. So thanks once again, and looking forward to chatting with you all on our next episode.