

Rosemary Rudy

734A Salter Ave.

Woodstock, ON, N4S 2P5

April 14, 2025

Oxford County Council

21 Reeve Street

Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3

RE: Proposal to Withdraw from the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program

Dear Members of Council,

My name is Rosemary Rudy, and I have been a proud resident of Woodstock and Oxford County for over 20 years. I begin by thanking you for what is often a thankless job. I appreciate how difficult it is to stay informed on the myriad of issues our city and county are facing.

One very concerning issue is the substantial — and ever-increasing — costs associated with the city and county's ongoing involvement with the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program, an initiative developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. You may be more familiar with its integration into the three guiding pillars of Oxford County:

1. Promoting Community Vitality
2. Enhancing Environmental Sustainability
3. Fostering Progressive Government

Our involvement in the PCP Program began in 2017 when Oxford County CAO and the then-Mayor of Woodstock signed on to this global-based initiative, designed to bring carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050.

While "If it's free, it's for me!" sounds good in theory, real-world application often proves otherwise. These pillars, while admirable, carry significant costs to implement. The PCP Program outlines five milestones, which require municipalities to collect extensive data, set CO₂ reduction targets, and implement Climate Action Plans that align with international agendas.

This model poses real challenges and risks reducing local decision-making power. Oxford County is being asked to adhere to global climate targets that may not reflect the practical, economic, or environmental priorities of our communities.

Oxford County's own values document outlines seven core values — one of which is "Sustainability," defined as “conscious and proactive effort to ensure the long-term viability of the County, its environment and everything that makes it a great place to live.” I fully support that vision.

Yet, Oxford County is unique — with vast farmland, small towns, and very different needs compared to large urban centres like Toronto or international cities such as Bangkok. The PCP program employs a "one size fits all" approach. Its slogans — "Zero Waste," "Zero Emissions," and now "Zero Vision" — sound sweeping, but they are increasingly costly and difficult to implement without significant trade-offs.

The Costs and Consequences of Climate Policies

According to a March 19, 2025 article in the Toronto Sun, citing the Fraser Institute:

“The impact of cutting emissions harms food production much more than climate change does... a green, low-carbon world produces less and more expensive food and makes over 50 million more people hungry by mid-century” [1].

Dr. Ross McKittrick, an economics professor at the University of Guelph, projected that Ottawa’s proposed \$170/tonne carbon tax by 2030 could result in nearly 185,000 lost jobs [2].

A January 2025 report titled "**Canada’s Path to Net Zero by 2050: Darkness at the End of the Tunnel**" concluded:

- Real GDP could decline by **7%**,
- Income per worker could fall by **6%**,
- **250,000 jobs** may be lost, and
- The annual cost per worker could exceed **\$8,000** [3].

While these statistics are national in scale, Oxford County’s continued commitment to the PCP Program aligns with these same net-zero goals — meaning we may face similar local consequences.

Scientific Context: CO₂ and Climate Policy

Let me be clear: CO₂ is a greenhouse gas, and the majority of scientists agree that human emissions influence climate. However, only about 0.3% of peer-reviewed climate papers directly assert that human activity is the primary driver of climate change [4].

Moreover, the logarithmic nature of CO₂ warming means that the more CO₂ we add, the less additional warming it causes — a fact often ignored in policy discussions [5].

Unlike sulfur dioxide or nitrogen oxides, CO₂ is essential for life. It is responsible for photosynthesis, and higher atmospheric CO₂ levels have been shown to increase agricultural yields and reduce water stress in plants, a phenomenon known as CO₂ fertilization [6].

Globally, CO₂ makes up just 0.04% of the atmosphere, and only 4% of that is from human activity. Canada contributes about 1.6% of that human-made CO₂ — meaning our total contribution to atmospheric CO₂ is approximately 0.0000256% [7].

Canada's landmass, with 89% of it uninhabited, contains massive carbon sinks — including forests, wetlands, and other ecosystems — that absorb large amounts of CO₂. Yet most net-zero frameworks ignore these natural absorption systems [8].

This is good news! Oxford County already serves as a carbon sink. Let's recognize and promote this reality instead of investing in costly programs with questionable benefits.

A Call for Local Stewardship

I'm as concerned as anyone about the health of our planet. We all want to protect our land and ensure a future for the next generation. But that stewardship must make economic sense and reflect local priorities.

So I ask:

- Why are we committing significant funds to meet climate goals that may not reflect Oxford's best interests?
- Are you aware of the full costs — including staff time, consultant fees, signage, and new program development like "Zero Vision"?
- Who has access to the vast amount of data collected? Who oversees it?
- Has a full benefit-cost analysis been conducted?

Here's the good news: the PCP Program is voluntary. Oxford County can choose to withdraw and instead invest in local environmental efforts that improve quality of life, protect farmland, support food production, and preserve our natural spaces.

Municipalities across Canada are re-evaluating their involvement.

- In 2023, Thorold, Ontario formally withdrew from the PCP.
- The County of Wheatland withdrew from the FCM Conference.
- County of Stettler No. 6 and Town of Vermillion withdrew from the FCM.
- And Renfrew County, Tiny Township and Waterloo Regional Council has requested to review its commitment after hearing public concern [9].

My Request

I respectfully ask that you:

- Review the economic and environmental costs and benefits of remaining in the PCP program.
- Consider the scientific and economic evidence presented — we can provide more if requested.
- Ask yourselves: can you confidently defend this program and its benefits to Oxford's constituents?

I am ultimately recommending that Oxford County withdraw from the Partners for Climate Protection Program and instead direct funding and resources into local environmental stewardship programs tailored to our unique geography and needs.

You have an incredibly important mandate. As seven people making decisions for over 130,000 residents, your choices affect everything from taxation to job creation, from food production to community well-being.

We are entering an economically challenging time. Now more than ever, every decision must be grounded in full-spectrum analysis, with local priorities at the core.

Please consider this request seriously.

Sincerely,
Rosemary Rudy
Woodstock Resident

References

1. Fraser Institute via Toronto Sun. "Carbon Emissions Cuts Harm Food Production More Than Climate Change." *Toronto Sun*, March 19, 2025.
2. McKittrick, Ross. "The Economic Impact of Canada's Carbon Tax." *University of Guelph*, March 17, 2025.
3. "Canada's Path to Net Zero by 2050: Darkness at the End of the Tunnel." *Published January 2025*.
4. Cook et al., "Quantifying the Consensus on Anthropogenic Global Warming in the Scientific Literature", *Environmental Research Letters*, 2013.
5. Idso, Craig. "The Truth About CO₂: The Logarithmic Effect", *CO₂ Science*, 2020.
6. NASA. "Carbon Dioxide Fertilization Greening Earth", *NASA Earth Observatory*, 2016.
7. Government of Canada. "National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Report", 2022.
8. Canadian Forest Service. "Canada's Forest Carbon", *Natural Resources Canada*, 2021.
9. Council Minutes and Public Statements: Thorold, Wheatland, Stettler No. 6, Vermillion, Tiny Township, Renfrew County and Waterloo Region, 2023–2025.