



# Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability

## Policy Position of Association of Yukon Communities (2025-26)

**Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability.** *Association of Yukon Communities*  
– For Discussion, April 2025

## 1. Background

Climate change is one of the most significant threats facing communities across Canada. From wildfires and permafrost thaw to increased energy costs and unpredictable weather, the impacts of a warming climate are already being felt in every region. For municipalities, environmental sustainability and climate resilience are no longer optional—they are essential components of local governance, planning, and infrastructure management.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has consistently called for expanded investment in climate mitigation and adaptation, green infrastructure, disaster resilience, and clean energy. In the Yukon, the stakes are especially high. Northern ecosystems are more sensitive to climate changes, and many communities have fewer resources to respond.

## 2. Yukon and Northern Context

Yukon municipalities face a distinct set of environmental and climate-related challenges:

- Accelerated permafrost thaw damaging roads, buildings, and utility systems;
- Increased frequency and severity of wildfires, drought, and flooding;
- Rising energy demands and high heating costs, often reliant on diesel or imported fuels;
- Limited capacity to implement local climate action plans or monitor greenhouse gas emissions; and
- A need for infrastructure that is both low-carbon and climate-resilient.

Despite these challenges, Yukon communities are also leaders in land stewardship, Indigenous-led environmental governance, and community-driven climate initiatives.

## 3. Policy Position

The Association of Yukon Communities supports a Climate Action Framework that centers municipal leadership in sustainability, climate adaptation, and energy transition. Yukon municipalities must be equipped with the tools, funding, and partnerships needed to reduce emissions, protect natural assets, and build infrastructure that can withstand future climate shocks. Climate action in the North must also reflect cultural knowledge, traditional land stewardship, and community-driven approaches to environmental sustainability.

#### 4. Recommendations

AYC calls on the federal and territorial governments to:

1. Establish a Yukon Climate Resilience Fund to support municipal adaptation planning, nature-based solutions, and resilient infrastructure projects.
2. Expand access to green infrastructure and clean energy programs, including funding for retrofits, renewable energy systems, and net-zero municipal buildings.
3. Support regional collaboration on climate action, including inter-municipal planning and climate knowledge-sharing networks.
4. Integrate climate risk assessments into all infrastructure and land use programs, ensuring that funding supports both mitigation and adaptation outcomes.
5. Provide technical assistance and capacity-building for local governments to develop, implement, and monitor climate action plans.
6. Advance Indigenous and community-led environmental stewardship, supporting local monitoring, traditional knowledge integration, and co-governance of land and water.

#### 5. Strategic Considerations

- Northern vulnerability: The North is warming up to four times faster than the global average, with outsized impacts on infrastructure, wildlife, and community health.
- High energy costs: Transitioning to renewable energy and energy efficiency measures can reduce municipal operating costs and improve affordability for residents.
- Carbon funding access: Many national funding streams are not tailored to small, northern, or capacity-constrained communities.
- Community engagement: Meaningful climate action must be driven by and for local residents, with accessible education and participatory planning processes.

## 6. Implementation

To ensure sustainable and effective municipal climate action, AYC recommends:

- Launching a Yukon Climate Action Partnership between AYC, the Yukon Government, Indigenous governments, and NGOs to align goals, resources, and implementation.
- Developing a Climate research for northern municipalities, including templates for climate plans, bylaws, and asset management tools.
- Establishing a community-based climate innovation program to pilot local solutions in areas such as food security, green building, and circular economy.
- Hosting a regular Sustainability Forum to highlight progress, share innovations, and build climate leadership across the territory.

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