



## Canadian women unignorable on energy policy and the prosperity gap

*By Tracey Bodnarchuk, CEO of Canada Powered by Women*

For Canadian women, life is getting harder. Food, housing, and energy have all become less affordable.

In [new research](#) released by [Canada Powered by Women](#), almost half (43 per cent) of engaged women across the country said that a shift in energy policy is making their lives more difficult.

What's even more concerning is how worried engaged women are about future energy policy; 89 per cent said these policies would strain their personal finances.

Let's take a moment to reflect on that.

Current energy policy has shifted so much that nearly every engaged woman in the entire country is worried about the financial strain that will come along with policies that don't even exist yet. They worry that future policies will have a negative impact on their lives and livelihoods, because they can see today's policies have already had that affect.

To quantify just how big this group is: 34.5 per cent of women in Canada identify as "engaged" which is the equivalent of 5.6 million women across the country who follow the news, see the connections between energy and the economy, are informed on politics and want a say in the future of energy in Canada. This means their voices and priorities need to be part of the conversations about energy policy.

More than one third of these women (34 per cent) do not agree that Canada has good energy policy.

Which begs the question: In a country as energy rich as Canada, why are our energy policies putting our prosperity at risk?

How did we get so off balance?

## The polarization of energy conversations

Today's polarized and emotional energy conversations are shutting down crucial dialogue about policy, emissions, and affordability.

What should be practical has become political.

Engaged women who interact with Canada Powered by Women—from Atlantic Canada to B.C.— tell us they're worried about getting judged for expressing an unpopular opinion.

Quiet conversations are happening across the country but we need safe opportunities for women to learn and express their views so they can influence the dialogue at decision-making tables. How are we supposed to know what women want from energy policy makers if we never hear from them?

Viable solutions must include input from everyone—whether you're concerned about high heating bills in Alberta, or the ripple effects of the carbon tax in B.C. or Ontario.

## **Prosperity that considers the environment is possible**

Even as engaged women express their fears and frustrations about the impact of energy policies on affordability and our standard of living, most support new policy ideas related to emissions reduction because they care about the environment.

And emissions reduction is an area where we as a country should be able to shine on an international stage. It's also an opportunity for inventors, creators and innovators to come forward from both inside and outside of the energy sector.

We *should* be able to supply key markets in Asia or Europe with cleaner-burning alternatives to coal.

But we don't.

Policy and regulatory hurdles have been significant factors holding back Canada's future energy export potential.

It is possible for us to have it all though. We can be leaders in reducing emissions with world-leading technology and innovation, while benefiting from the revenue and jobs it would create here at home.

## **It's time to be unignorable**

Engaged women are informed, they vote and have purchasing power. There are 5.6 million of us who are paying attention and want change.

When Canada Powered by Women started in 2019, we committed to amplifying the voices of women. It's time for policy makers to pay attention to these voices and deliver a more balanced approach that considers the economy, reliability and sustainability as well as the environment.

Engaged women are taking a prosperity position. It's their time to be heard, and for policy to reflect what women in Canada are asking for.

Let's have the courage to engage in bold conversations across the country that come up with

solutions. Our prosperity depends on it.

### **About Canada Powered by Women**

In 2019, a group of women with backgrounds in various sectors, including energy, founded Canada Powered by Women to put the spotlight on an important gap: women's voices in the energy transformation conversation and the balance of energy security, the environment and the economy. The organization aims to understand what women across the country are thinking and feeling. CPW creates opportunities to bring women together to find common ground on energy transformation and is a vehicle for the voices of many women across Canada to be amplified in a manner that is unignorable and has real impact.

Canada Powered by Women facilitates discussions amongst women across the country, creating a trusted place to talk about complex issues that matter, a place to listen and a place to raise awareness and create positive change for all Canadians.