

Canada Post as a Leader for Environmental Innovation

CUPW, Canada Post Corporation, and the environment

Over the years, CUPW has been increasingly oriented toward action on climate change. The union has been part of Work in a Warming World (WWW), an effort by the labour movement and researchers at York University to apply climate-change science and action to bring work and workplaces into focus as we act on climate change. We've also supported and been involved in international labour working groups on climate justice and sustainability. CUPW is fighting climate change at the union-employer level by applying insight from WWW to negotiations with Canada.

Canada Post's carbon footprint reaches across the land. It is the federal government's largest and most extensive network to implement necessary economic transformation. Bold action by Canada Post can set an example for individuals, communities, and businesses throughout the country. It is essential that joint efforts continue to reduce its environmental impact. By leading a transformation that can apply to every household, and streamlining operations to mitigate climate change, Canada Post has a privileged position to become an agent of environmental innovation.

Delivering Community Power

In 2016, a coalition was formed between CUPW, the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA), Friends of Public Services, the Leap Manifesto team, ACORN Canada, and SmartChange. The Delivering Community Power coalition came together on the premise that the postal system is an integral infrastructure to create public-sector-based, large-scale, bold action on environmental sustainability. This unprecedented opportunity to support concrete change can be supported by postal workers and used to invest in the future of postal services and postal workers' future.

The [full proposal](http://www.deliveringcommunitypower.ca), available at www.deliveringcommunitypower.ca, includes converting the Canada Post vehicle fleet to electric vehicles; providing electric vehicle charging stations at postal facilities; installing solar panels; investing in sustainability retrofit of postal facilities; expanding door-to-door services; expanding retail services and using post offices as community hubs among other initiatives.

The proposal identifies many opportunities to address climate injustices, and other social injustices simultaneously. It places postal banking as a key element, since a postal bank can

provide a mechanism for financing community infrastructure projects and other green initiatives, and calls for the restoration of the Food Mail Program. On the whole, its vision rests on using the postal system to address climate change by expanding services and developing new services, not cutting services.

We recommend that the government give direction to Canada Post to leverage its network and explore the initiatives proposed in the Delivering Community Power report.

We recommend that Canada Post lead by example, by retrofitting all corporate-owned postal facilities for energy conservation and sustainable practices, and seek federal infrastructure funding to do so.

Appendix T – Joint innovation projects

Apart from the coalition that proposed Delivering Community Power, CUPW's main avenue for environmental initiatives in the postal service is Appendix T- a union-management joint fund for innovation, service expansion and job creation.

The union side of the Appendix T working group has proposed numerous projects over recent years. Canada Post has agreed to two of these projects which are currently mandated: a paper-use reduction project in the Grievance & Arbitration process, and a pilot project to collect used batteries at postal outlets. Given the reach and scope of Canada Post's operations, it is evident that more initiatives are required to implement financial and ecological sustainability.

We recommend that Appendix T of the Urban collective agreement be reinvigorated and used as a basis for trial projects and innovation.

We recommend that the Standing Committee promote a service expansion and innovation agenda at Canada Post, and pursue immediate exploration of specific projects including an electrical vehicle charging network and energy conserving retrofits.

Transparency and accountability of Canada Post initiatives

Canada Post boasts a commitment to environmental responsibility. It reports reductions in greenhouse gases, meeting LEED certification standards on new facilities, and the environmental benefits of using postal services and online-shopping.

Some changes in operations reverse the trend. Modifications to delivery methods since 2009 have converted letter carrier foot walks to motorized routes, and consolidation of mail sortation has resulted in detours. For instance, all mail from Vancouver Island or Prince-Edward Island, now takes a round trip by truck to a sorting plant rather than being sorted locally for local delivery.

While some of these moves are positive, others undermine existing efforts towards sustainability. Operations should be made transparent to Canadians who seek accountability from Canada Post on its commitment to environmental responsibility.

We recommend that the Standing Committee ask Canada Post for a full account of concrete outcomes from Canada Post's efforts to reduce GHG emissions, energy consumption, and waste.

We recommend that all proposed operational changes at Canada Post be evaluated on their environmental impact, and be required to reduce the system's environmental footprint, while also meeting existing negotiated conditions that protect the health and safety of postal workers.

We recommend that along with the cost per delivery method, Canada Post include in its annual report the environmental impact of delivery methods per point-of-call. In the case of CMBs, this should include all compounding impacts such as user habits of driving individually to their mailbox and/or idling their vehicle to retrieve mail.

Summary of recommendations

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