A group of UBC researchers is working to ensure that Canada will never again face the tragedy of a national tainted blood scandal.

Ross MacGillivray, director of the new Centre for Blood Research (CBR), is leading an interdisciplinary team of researchers dedicated to building a better blood supply.

Ross MacGillivray leads an interdisciplinary team of researchers dedicated to building a better blood supply. The CBR's Blood Research Centre is the first of its kind. Hilary Thomson

Ross MacGillivray leads an interdisciplinary team of researchers dedicated to building a better blood supply.

Media Coverage Misses Key Issues of Kyoto Accord Says UBC Professor

While Alberta remains locked in battle with Ottawa over ratification of the Kyoto Accord and its costs, John Robinson sees an opportunity for British Columbia to lead the way in tackling the climate change issue by championing sustainability. It's the best strategy for saving Mother Earth and one that can generate economic benefits too, Robinson believes.

The current flurry of media attention on the Kyoto path accord has focused almost entirely on the question of the expected costs of meeting the Kyoto target for Canada. In doing so it has missed the issue and ignored the key message of recent research and activity in the climate change arena.

This message has to do with the degree to which investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy will itself stimulate both technological and institutional innovation that will take us down new pathways that might be much more desirable than what would happen if we don't do this. This crucial point emerges directly from the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in 2001, where several hundred expert authors and reviewers examined the academic literature on climate change emission reduction.

What we discovered in that work was that achieving sustainable development is the single most important thing we can do to reach our long-term climate change targets (which go well beyond the Kyoto targets). The reason is simple. If we can manage, as a world, to get on technological and socio-economic development pathways that are sustainable, we will have very low emissions, even without any explicit climate policies (since many policies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be done for other reasons).

The extra climate policies required to stabilize atmospheric concentrations at a reasonable level will be relatively minor. But if we are on a high-emissions path, then the additional climate policy required to stabilize atmospheric concentrations at a reasonable level will be massive and prohibitively expensive.

In other words, getting on the right development path is more important than implementing any particular climate policy. And early introduction of carbon-saving technologies would have the positive effect of lowering their costs in the long run due to economies of scale and learning by doing. This renders static costs assessments irrelevant. The costs of mitigation are a function of the development path taken.

The importance of this point is that there are many other reasons to get on a sustainable development path. And many of them offer remarkable business opportunities. To give just one example, the urban population of the world is going to increase by about 50 per cent over the next 30 years. And all these cities need to address the same ten challenges: clean air, clean water, water supply, energy, transportation, land use, jobs, housing, health and waste disposal. Most of them are doing an inadequate job of many of these challenges already and the job is going to get about twice as hard over the next few decades as populations and economies grow.
Freddie Wood alumni speak up

At the UBC theatre school 50th anniversary gala luncheon, alumnus John Gray told the Toronto Star that “UBC empowered us, at a time when few other theatre schools were willing to take chances.”

“To the people we met here, theatre really mattered,” said actress N’Icola Cavendish. “It made us feel that it was the best, the bravest, the finest thing you could do with your life, and I've carried that feeling with me ever since.”

Harcourt injured in fall

Former premier Mike Harcourt was saved from almost certain death by his wife, Beokie, after he fell eight metres down an oceanside cliff and into frigid water.

Harcourt, who once played for UBC’s basketball team, fell from the deck to the ground, and then tumbled a few metres to go over an eight-metre cliff outside his cottage, overlooking the Strait of Georgia.

Harcourt served as B.C.’s premier from 1991 to 1996, and for three terms was mayor of Vancouver, from 1986 to 1986, following four terms as Vancouver alderman, from 1972 to 1980. He is a senior associate of the Liu Institute for Global Issues at UBC and a senior associate with the Sustainable Development Research Institute at UBC. His son, Judson, is a recent graduate of UBC.

Ontario to turn away students

Plagued by the double cohort, Ontario universities are reluctantly considering turning away qualified international students coming to the province in the next few years.

Ontario student enrolments at UBC to grow

UBC may become even more attractive to international students as the number of U.S. students declines, according to research presented at the recent Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species in Chile.

The victory comes when we can go back to more parochial B.C. Aums and former Premier Mike Harcourt, now 95, survives near fatal fall.
UBC journalism professor is concerned that it won't. By Erica Smihek

Sensational Murder Trial Must Stay Open to Reporters

Media and the public will be allowed in the courtroom when Robert Pickton's preliminary hearing gets underway Jan. 13. But how long the court remains open is anyone's guess.

"I think a quarter of the way through the hearing, we will have another petition from the defence lawyer to seal the court. He will see potentially damaging information published by American media or the foreign press," says Stephen Ward, an associate professor at UBC's School of Journalism. "We're not through with this yet. It's not the final word on the issue."

In early December, Provincial Court Judge David Stone refused to exclude the public and reporters from one of the biggest murder cases in Canadian history. Pickton's defence lawyer, Peter Ritchie, had requested a seal of the courtroom, arguing that an onslaught of publicity would make it impossible to find 12 impartial jurors for Pickton's trial, a test of first-degree murder. He was particularly concerned that foreign reporters would break a publication ban imposed on the preliminary hearing.

"I thought that the defence request was over the top and a violation of the constitutional rights of the public and the families of the victims and the media's right to know," Ward says. "Stone's ruling is a very positive step for people who believe in an open court system."

Ward says given the high-profile nature of the case and the intense scrutiny police have come under for their investigation, it was particularly important to allow the media and public access.

"If you shut the court down, it will just breed more conspiracy theories and more mistrust in the legal system," says Ward, who is currently writing a book on journalism and justice systems. Preliminary hearing publication bans are common and Canadian journalists usually obey them. When a verdict in the trial is delivered, journalists are free to report the evidence from the hearing.

Since foreign journalists are not bound by Canadian law, Ritchie is concerned they will break the ban and release details of the hearing. "The laws of the preliminary hearing have not caught up with the media and the courts." Ward says.

"Borders mean nothing. You can't seal off information anymore." Ward says "You can't seal off information. You can't seal off information anymore."

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Ward says if the court allows the media to attend, they will probably always be tension between the media and the courts.

"There are no easy answers here," says Ward. "I am sympathetic to the worriedness of a fair trial. But Paul Bernardo got one. Shannon Murrin got one. Robert Pickton will get one too."

Ward, who holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Waterloo and spent 10 years with the Canadian Press as a foreign correspondent and bureau chief, says reporting on sensational crimes is the oldest form of news we have. He says while courtroom coverage is often criticized for being biased, misleading, superficial and sensational, it's "part of the cost of having a free press."

"The only way to avoid it is to completely ban media from the court and that is just not appropriate or acceptable." Ward says.

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3D Ultrasound, Coming Soon to a Doctor Near You?

Improved technology gives doctors a better look inside

BY MICHELLE COOK

Moms-and-dads-to-be may soon be able to see their growing babies more clearly thanks to new ultrasound technology. The advanced imaging method could also help medical professionals to improve their diagnostic capabilities in detecting cancer and removing tumors. That is, if they're willing to make the switch to 3D, says Prof. Robert Rohling, a professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at UBC.

"Three-dimensional ultrasound is slowly making its way into the marketplace, but doctors have to be convinced that it's useful to them, otherwise they won't spend the money to buy expensive machinery or spend the time training to use it. They're tough customers for good reasons," says Rohling. "To get doctors to prove to them it will make a difference in making better diagnoses, they need to see that it's worth their while." Rohling says 3D ultrasound has been used in research labs for almost 15 years, but it is just now beginning to make its way into practice.

Rohling's research focuses on developing better quality 3D ultrasound technology for clinical use. His efforts were boosted recently by the purchase of a GE 730 Expert. The first equipment of its kind in Western Canada, Rohling calls it the "Porshe" of ultrasound machines.

So, just what difference does 3D make when it comes to taking a peek inside ourselves? Judging from the image that pops up on the GE 730 of twin fetuses wiggling around in the womb, it's a lot like the difference between black and white and colour TV. Rohling prefers to use the analogy of a loaf of bread. "2D-ultrasound images are flat, grainy-looking and unless you're a skilled technician, can be hard to decipher," Rohling says. "2D generates a cross-sectional image which is like looking at a single slice of bread, instead of the whole loaf."

These images can be difficult to interpret because we live in a three-dimensional world, Rohling explains, and our mind has a difficult time trying to fit these two-dimensional pieces together into a three-dimensional object. 3D ultrasound also produces cross-sectional slices, but stacks them together into a volume - like a whole loaf - that has width and depth and height and can be viewed from multiple angles.

By using computer graphics techniques that are "a lot like the ones you'd see in the latest blockbuster movies," Rohling says 3D ultrasound can also be used to single out individual features, like skin, for examination. The technique is called volume rendering. "Rohling is quick to point out that 3D technology is not meant to replace 2D ultrasound, which is currently used in 99% of ultrasounds worldwide, but to complement it. From the patient's point of view, 3D can give them a better understanding of what you see on the screen and they are more satisfied."

While experienced sonographers already do a tremendous amount with 2D images, Rohling, who has a background in biomedical engineering, hopes his research will help doctors to improve on a number of procedures. In the area of diagnoses, he hopes to enhance the clarity and resolution of images so that clinicians can see minor details and detect cancers at earlier stages. In the area of interventional, which includes biopsies and surgery, he is working on providing special ultrasound tools and software to physicians to allow them to perform these faster, easier and more accurately.

He has also been working with a team of researchers nationwide in neurosurgery innovation. Currently, physicians must rely on day-old MRI scans when operating on the brain. The problem is the brain can shift and expand during surgery. Rohling hopes to use a small brain probe to provide surgeons with "real-time" ultrasound updates of the MRI scan during the procedure.

Prof. Robert Rohling shows off the "Porshe" of 3D ultrasound machines - the GE 730 Expert.

The differences between 2D ultrasound (right) and 3D ultrasound (left) include colour and higher definition.

The studio is equipped with fibre optic cables that allow any broadcaster in the world to take a live feed from UBC. Here, Lloyd Axworthy chats live with Newsworld host Don Newman in Ottawa and former Foreign Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall in Toronto.

THE VANCOURVER INSTITUTE

FIRST SUNDAY LECTURES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF B.C.

January 18
Mr. James Deligianni
Director Vancouver Maritime Museum

DISCOVERING THE KUBA: ANA'S LOST FOOT

January 25
Mr. Herta Wild
Director, 730: The Story of an Addicted City and Mr. Philip Owens
Former Mayor, City of Vancouver

THE POLITICS AND ART OF A SOCIAL REVOLUTION

February 1
SPECIAL LECTURE AND RECEPTION
LOCATION: UBC BRUCE BUILDING
Professor Randy Martin
School of Music
UBC

A VERY HUMBLE LADIES OF THE STAGE
A CELEBRATION OF GREAT FEMALE PERSONALITIES

With the kind permission of our February 1 lecture, all Vancouver Institute lectures are filmed on Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. at Lectures Hall B, 2nd Floor/University Grounds, Center at Chancellor's Point (UBC). Admission is by donation, how and the public is invited to attend.

UBC NEWS TV IS ON THE AIR
Super Students With Diverse Resumes Win Top Scholarships

Grades alone won’t make the mark. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Their resumes set more accomplishments and activities than many adults can claim in a lifetime. Yet they’re only recent high school graduates, all starting their second terms at UBC. 

Heather Buckley, Lik Hang Lee, Edward Man-Tsun Cheung and David Wei Si are the 2002 recipients of the Bank of Montreal National Scholarships. The undergraduate scholarships are each valued at $40,000 over four years and rank among the premier university awards in Canada.

They are awarded to students entering UBC from high school or transferring from other institutions who demonstrate academic excellence in combination with significant contributions to the community through volunteerism, athletics or artistic excellence.

“My biggest challenge was time management, trying to handle academics and activities," says of a high school career at Fraser Heights Secondary in Surrey that included student council, leadership and global issues teams, the student newsletter, the theatre club, rugby, volleyball, basketball and swimming, the Youth Leadership Millennium, Centennial Toast-masters Club and Canadian Cancer Society, among others. He was also the top Grade 11 and 12 science student at his secondary school.

“"You have to study smart so you save time,” he explains. “You can't just cram five hours of studying in because you don't have those five hours.”

All the scholarship recipients say their level of participation increased markedly moved through the school system. All say they took on activities because they enjoyed and were challenged by them, not because they would look good on a resume or scholarship application.

“"I wasn't unique in terms of the amount of my commitments,” Buckley says of life at Calgary's Western Canada High School. "But nothing came naturally for me. When I succeeded, it was worth more to me, it was a real challenge to keep going. When I was successful, it was because I had to work at it.”

As part of the scholarship application process, the students had stated their ultimate educational and career objectives. Most are already re-thinking their goals in light of the new classes and experiences they’re finding at UBC.

“My stated goal was medicine but I’m just not sure now,” says.

Cheung, a Science One student from Handsworth Secondary in North Vancouver. “In these short four months, I've opened my eyes to new options and different programs of study. There are lots of interesting taking on commitments that mean a lot to them.

Lee, for example, has joined the First-year Committee, Science Undergraduates Society, and the Emerging Leaders Initiative, a program designed to help first-year students develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge they need to prepare them to take leadership roles at UBC and beyond.

"It's very hard to define what leadership means to me," says

When I succeeded, it was worth more to me, it was a real challenge to keep going. When I was successful, it was because I had to work at it.

UBC English Student Receives Rhodes Scholarship

"It’s not just about being a bookworm..." BY ERICA SMISHEK

Yaa-Hemaa Obiri-Yeboah has covered a lot of ground in her 21 years - and she’s just getting started.

Completing her fourth year of an English Honours program with a Political Science minor, she recently received the 2003 Rhodes Scholarship for British Columbia. She will pursue graduate studies in English with a concentration in African literature at Oxford University beginning in October.

"It looks like I’ll be spending a lot of time in the library," the articulate and personable student jokes about her future at Oxford.

"As an international institution, there will be a lot of opportunities, I’ll be in a place where I can grow intellectually and socially, I’ll have access to a lot of people and I’ll have the ability to travel.”

Obiri-Yeboah came to Canada from Ghana as a refugee at the age of two when her parents fled a military coup. She now mentors children in the African-Canadian community and writes opinion pieces for The Afro News, a paper directed to Vancouver’s African-Canadian community.

"I see the African Studies programme as an opportunity to become more political and eloquent in things in their community and in the world.”

As part of her academic career, Obiri-Yeboah plays field hockey, teaches piano and has spent a great deal of time working in student politics and in writing and speaking on issues related to human rights and the plight of marginalized peoples.

Eleven Rhodes Scholarships are awarded in Canada each year, one of which is allocated to British Columbia.
Students Want More Consultation Before Tuition is Raised Again

BY MICHÈLE COOK

A proposal to increase tuition fees by 20 to 30 per cent is scheduled to be presented to UBC’s Board of Governors for approval in late January but student leaders are saying they haven’t been adequately consulted on the process. The proposal is for tuition in the 2003/04 academic year to be raised by 30 per cent for most undergraduate and 20 per cent for research-based graduate programs. Increases for professional graduate programs such as Journalism, Architecture and Human Kinetics range from 20 to 30 per cent. A differentiated undergraduate engineering fee is proposed which would increase tuition by 40 per cent.

UBC Vice-President, Students, Brian Sullivan said that while last March’s tuition increases have allowed the university to make improvements in course availability, class size, classrooms, technical support and other areas, there are additional measures that must be taken.

“The university is still coming out of a prolonged period of frozen tuition fees and we know the quality of programs has suffered. We have evidence that we are beginning to turn things around, and we’ve looked at the resources required to make additional improvements. In our estimate that requires increases at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.” Sullivan said. He adds that even with the proposed increases, UBC remains substantially below the national average. Outside of Quebec, it is still the least expensive university in Canada to attend.

Both AMS President Kristen Harvey and GSS president Brian de Alwis, who together represent the 37,000 students at UBC, say that the university has not consulted with students sufficiently on the proposed increases.

“We were advized of this proposal a few days before the end of term,” de Alwis says. “When you’re going to consult with students you have to do it when it’s possible for them. That’s not during exams or during Christmas break when there’s not a huge percentage of students on campus.”

Harvey adds that students don’t have critical pieces of information including an efficiencies report on where revenue from the last year’s tuition increases has been spent, and an assessment of the tuition increase.

Sullivan admits that the timing for consulting with students has been tight, but says meeting with students will be a top priority leading up to January’s Board of Governors meeting.

“There’s lots of student interest in this matter especially the size of the tuition increase, access and how the money is being spent.” Sullivan said. “We will make ourselves available to meet with students any time and any place. Any student who wants to have a voice in this will.”

If approved, Sullivan says the tuition hikes are expected to generate $28 million in additional revenue for UBC. The funds will be used to attract and retain top quality faculty, improve faculty-to-student ratios, maintain teaching facilities. An additional $5 million will be allocated to support specific improvements to UBC’s learning environment identified in consultation with students and deans, and $4 million will be allocated to additional student financial support.

The tuition proposal is scheduled to be presented to the Board of Governors on Jan. 27, 2003. The Finance Committee of the Board, which meets on Jan. 23, will review the tuition proposal and the student consultation process, and may consider holding a special meeting in February to discuss tuition increases and additional consultations be deemed necessary.

If the current proposal is approved, the new fee schedule will take effect in May 2003. A report on how last year’s revenue was allocated is available at students.ubc.ca/cain/finance/tuitionpolicy.cfm. (j)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Institute of Applied Mathematics

DIRECTOR

UBC invites applications for the position of Director of the Institute of Applied Mathematics (IAM), to take office July 1, 2003. IAM promotes interdisciplinary research and teaching involving computational and applied mathematics. The search for Director is internal within UBC. Applicants should bring experience or major interest in applied mathematics, and may be from any faculty or department. The successful candidate will be a scholar of exceptional standing with a broad vision for interdisciplinary, demonstrable commitment to excellence in research, proven leadership and administrative abilities, and commanding interpersonal skills. Deadline: January 30, 2003.

Fisheries Centre

DIRECTOR

UBC invites applications for the position of Director of the Fisheries Centre, to take office July 1, 2003, or as soon thereafter as possible. The Fisheries Centre at UBC is a world-class unit with particular strength in ecosystems-based approaches and tools, and marine conservation. The successful candidate must be an internationally distinguished scholar of exceptional standing, and bring a broad vision for interdisciplinary fisheries research. The new Director will demonstrate an understanding of the principles of emerging ecosystem-based science, and the capacity to initiate and support collaborative research and graduate programs. Deadline: February 28, 2003.

St. John’s College

PRINCIPAL

The University of British Columbia invites applications for the position of Principal of St. John’s College, to take office July 1, 2003, or as soon as possible thereafter. St. John’s College was established sixty years ago as an academic graduate college with a focus on interdisciplinarity, global issues, and cultural diversity. The Principal must be an internationally distinguished scholar with exceptional qualities in leadership, collaboration, and service. Administrative experience and community service in an academic setting are definite assets. The Principal will hold a joint appointment at the professoral rank in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC, with a maximum three-year appointment.

An administrative stipend will be available, as will administrative leave. Deadline: February 15, 2003.

Fostering Innovation in Research and Learning

GRAD.UBC.CA
Vancouver Ready for Safe Injection Sites, Say UBC Experts

Research indicates lives and money will be saved

BY HILARY THOMSON

There are few issues in Vancouver more controversial than the creation of safe injection sites for the addicts in the city’s Downtown Eastside. In a recent municipal election, this issue played a major role in the upset of an entire slate of city councilors.

Medical experts at UBC have not hesitated to wade into the debate.

Dr. Michael O’Shaughnessy, director of the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, says safe injection sites would improve what many health-care professionals are calling a public health crisis.

“These sites are not a perfect solution, nor will all addicts use them,” he says. “But it is clear that there is a group of individuals who regularly use the safe sites, based on results from users, former users, and experts in addiction counselling.

Often confused with shooting galleries – areas run by drug dealers where addicts can inject – safe injection sites are health facilities. There, people who have purchased the drug can inject safely, using clean needles and equipment under the supervision of trained staff. Users have access to medical and social support services at the facility and can be referred to detox centers and drug treatment programs.

O’Shaughnessy is confident that users would participate in the sites, based on results from the Vancouver Injection Drug Users League and research conducted by local researchers in 2001. Users were specifically asked if they would use such a site and the majority indicated they would. In addition, users stated that they continued to share needles despite the availability of a large needle exchange program.

“We have learned what not having a site leads to,” says O’Shaughnessy. “It is time for us to approach this epidemic with a view to reducing the incidence of overdose and deaths.”

In addition to health benefits, approximately 45 sites in a dozen cities in Europe and Australia are credited with limiting violence associated with drug use, reducing the public nuisance of people injecting on the street and the health risk of needles discarded in public places.

A key benefit of safe injection sites is the opportunity to establish relationships with addicted individuals to help them stabilize their lives, says Edward Kruk, associate professor of Social Work and an expert in addiction counselling.

In Europe, social workers staff the sites along with users or former users who serve as peer counselors. Users can determine their own goals that may or may not include abstinence but might include finding housing and meaningful employment, seeing a doctor, improving nutrition, and obtaining social supports.

Kruk counters the argument that money for sites could be better spent on treatment facilities by pointing out that traditional treatment methods don’t work that well. In Frankfurt, Germany, the rate of recovery for those using safe injection sites is more than four times higher than for North Americans using traditional treatment methods, he reports.

“We need to examine the whole issue of addiction treatment from the perspective of drug users and former users,” he says. “There’s been a huge shift in the public and political sentiment here over the last three years and I think Vancouver is ready for safe injection sites.”

$8.7 billion by 2004 if current trends continue.

Alcohol and drug users incur costs for doctor visits, hospital services, emergency rooms, detox and treatment programs to treat bacterial infections and other illnesses. In addition, there are policing and legal costs to enforce drug laws.

Health Canada is currently accepting proposals from cities interested in establishing safe injection sites and a federally approved site could be established sometime this year. It is not yet known how sites will be funded. The cost of establishing and monitoring a single site in its first year could cost between $500,000 and $800,000, according to network officials.

With more than 2,000 overdose deaths since 1992, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is the country’s most visible drug addiction problem, says O’Shaughnessy. In addition, approximately 30 per cent of addicts are HIV-positive and more than 90 per cent have hepatitis C virus.

Researchers and health-care practitioners in Vancouver have led the academic debate in Canada on the topic of safe injection sites, he says, and opinions are divided about the value of such sites.

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In Europe, social workers staff the sites along with users or former users who serve as peer counselors. Users can determine their own goals that may or may not include abstinence but might include finding housing and meaningful employment, seeing a doctor, improving nutrition, and obtaining social supports.

Kruk counters the argument that money for sites could be better spent on treatment facilities by pointing out that traditional treatment methods don’t work that well. In Frankfurt, Germany, the rate of recovery for those using safe injection sites is more than four times higher than for North Americans using traditional treatment methods, he reports.

“We need to examine the whole issue of addiction treatment from the perspective of drug users and former users,” he says. “There’s been a huge shift in the public and political sentiment here over the last three years and I think Vancouver is ready for safe injection sites.”
Kyoto Accord
continued from page 1

This is a tremendous economic opportunity. The World Bank has estimated that trillions of dollars of new urban infrastructure will have to be built over the next decade. Who is going to get a piece of this action? My belief is that those who can deliver technologies and services in a more sustainable fashion, including the use of low-carbon technologies, will have a major competitive advantage.

This is the opportunity represented by the Kyoto targets. The countries, and companies, that move fastest in developing technologies and processes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve environmental quality, and create jobs are likely to do rather well in a more crowded and congested future. It is not that there will not be costs associated with achieving these opportunities. But incurring these costs will give rise to both environmental and economic benefits they are investments in a more sustainable world.

Moreover, achieving sustainable development futures will require massive innovation, and the development of new technologies and services, including especially new telecommunications and information technologies. As a result, moving in this direction is strongly consistent with, and supportive of, the development of the new information economy the pundits tell us is necessary for Canada to achieve prosperity in the future.

So the politicians who voice fears about the costs of Kyoto are actually thinking about the issue the wrong way. In fact, it is failing to act on the Kyoto opportunity that will pose the real net costs – environmental, social and economic – on Canadian society.

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