



SCOTIA GROUP



POLICY PROPOSAL 7.

CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN



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Ideas for Communications Campaign

The best way to influence political leaders, and to pave the way for their cooperation, may be to shift the electoral calculus underneath them. If we can change voters' minds, we can change their elected leaders' actions. But resistance to climate change policy is not spread evenly across social groups in the United States and around the world, so the messaging in support of climate action must adapt to this reality by targeting those who are most resistant to it. Here are some simple thoughts on how to craft a more effective way of reaching these segments of the population.

1. Hope sells

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2. The messenger matters

Climate change has been framed as a matter of believing the experts or following the science. But many of the target demographics are sceptical about experts and science, and this way of framing the issue codes it as a problem for “the other side”—the professional elite. It is therefore important to pick messengers to whom the target audience can relate. A messaging campaign should feature the voices of those who are among the most trusted professional categories -- among conservatives especially. Survey data suggests these categories include nurses, clergy, medical doctors, grade-school teachers, farmers, police officers, and pharmacists.



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3. Stories, not arguments, move people

Research shows that while facts occasionally persuade people, compelling narratives are often more effective. The climate world is abundant with stories of individuals and groups taking on challenges and succeeding, from farmers diversifying their agricultural products to corporations working toward net zero emissions. A messaging campaign could feature members of the most trusted professional categories and tell the stories of how they are working toward healthy, sustainable communities and stable economies.

4. Interpersonal connections count

Climate change initiatives are often presented in terms of their planetary impact. But people are much more motivated to help the human beings around them than they are to save humanity in some general sense. Messaging that highlights the cooperative role of family, friendship, and community forges positive associations. It also brings it close to home. We're just not doing this for "the planet," isolated stretches of landscape, or interests that may be perceived as abstract or "elite." Instead, we should emphasize that we are taking on this challenge because we care about one another.

Submitted By:

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