

Climate Change Communication and Engagement in Canada's Provincial Norths: A Collaborative Place-based Approach

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Project Funders: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Project Status: In-process

Project Description: Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity, with widespread anticipated and already occurring social, economic, and ecological impacts. However, there is a general lack of concerted action in response to climate change, both in Canada and globally. To mobilize climate action, citizen engagement and support from the public is imperative, beginning with effective communication around anticipated climate change impacts and potential solutions. In order to usefully promote engagement and action in response to climate change, communication strategies must consider unique local and regional contexts. Climate change research and outreach in Canada, however, particularly focuses on major urban centres (predominantly located in southern regions) and in the Canadian Arctic. Given this gap in research and application, this project focuses on climate change communication in Canada's Provincial Norths. The northern regions of Canadian provinces are broadly characterized by remoteness, political marginalization, dependence on natural resource extraction, tensions between economic and energy policy, and heightened vulnerability to climate change. Given this context, responding to climate change and promoting climate adaption will require unique and innovative strategies and solutions, developed in collaboration with northern communities. The research will be conducted in two case study communities located in Canada's Provincial Norths: Thunder Bay (Northern Ontario) and Prince George (Northern British Columbia). Through gathering information around public perception of climate change, this project seeks to develop climate change communication strategies to promote citizen engagement with climate change in the context of Canada's Provincial Norths. The first phase of this project will document public beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of climate change and climate action in Thunder Bay, ON and Prince George, BC. Building off Phase 1 findings, the second phase will develop climate change communication strategies aimed at promoting citizen engagement with climate change in the context of Canada's Provincial Norths. Overall, this project seeks advance our collective understanding of how to communicate climate change impacts and solutions in ways that promote citizen engagement.

Role of the CIRC: CIRC staff are collaborating on this project with researchers from Lakehead University and Simon Fraser University. This includes the conduct of in-depth interviews with climate change champions in Prince George, BC, and the implementation of a city-wide mail out survey for both Prince George and Thunder Bay, ON.

Key Deliverables: This project will lead to the production of a variety of scholarly publications, presentations and report. We will continue to update this document as results become available.