



Climate Reason #6 to Defeat Ford

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REASON NUMBER 6

6. Ford's health care cuts increase climate health risks

The climate emergency is one of the most severe health issues we face. And it will get worse. Some existing health threats will intensify, new health threats will emerge, and our health care system, in the throes of COVID-19, will be stressed beyond endurance. ([Link to Climate Crime #31](#))

In a recent landmark report, the World Health Organization states: "Fossil Fuels are killing us. Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity."

Scientists and health professionals are clear about the health impacts of the climate crisis:

- Extreme weather is taking a toll on peoples' physical and mental health.

- Heat waves are killing people.

- Climate disasters are leaving survivors suffering from PTSD and other mental health issues.

- Air pollution from burning fossil fuels is causing respiratory, and cardiovascular diseases.

- Allergens are increasing.

- Food, water and vector borne diseases are on the rise, and

- Food security is undermined.

The climate crisis is exposing more people to hazardous conditions, but poor, racialized, Indigenous and remote communities are particularly vulnerable to its effects.

High temperatures cause deaths

With Canada's temperature warming at twice the global average, extreme heat waves will become more common. Last summer's heat dome in British Columbia, the deadliest weather event in Canadian history, killed 600 people in B.C. most of them seniors and many with a chronic illness. Many lived alone, in poorer neighbourhoods with little green space.



GHG air pollution

Air pollution in Ontario is leading to more hospitalizations and deaths. Air pollution, from car and truck emissions, causes more than 15,000 premature deaths per year in Canada, including 6,600 in Ontario. The total economic cost of all health effects caused by air pollution is an astonishing \$120 Billion per year. ([Link to Climate Crime #25](#))

Asthma, one of the ways we suffer from air pollution, is on the rise. Approximately 10 per cent of Canadians are affected. Children living in poorer, more polluted neighbourhoods in Ontario, are more likely to develop childhood asthma, as are Indigenous children.

Air pollution is also a major factor in increased susceptibility to COVID. COVID rates are significantly higher in neighbourhoods of Toronto with high levels of traffic-related air pollution, and which are highly racialized. Long term exposure to air pollution is also associated with higher COVID mortality rates.

Lessons from COVID

The COVID pandemic has clearly demonstrated the need for a strong and resilient health care system. We need fully-staffed and equipped health care facilities, a robust public health system, and adequate funding, all backed with a strong spine of science.

The Ford government has left Ontarians ill-prepared to deal with the health impacts of the climate crisis, just as the Ford government left us ill-equipped to deal with the pandemic. After four years of a Ford government, and despite his promises, Ontario still does not have a climate adaptation plan, an essential prong in responding to climate health risks.

After four years of Ford, our health care system is in serious trouble. Once elected Ford immediately embarked on a cost-cutting rampage that stripped our health systems of funding, services and staff, and forced increased privatization of health services. It began just a few days after he was sworn in, when he fired Ontario's Chief Scientist.

Since then, Ford's record has been a litany of cuts.

We are now left with a health system that is underfunded by at least \$4.5 Billion, and a government that is sitting on unallocated funds. Instead of committing to a healthy recovery, Ford has compromised the healthcare system and its ability to deal with the climate emergency.