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**Yukon Government Releases Climate Change Action Plan**

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government is pleased to release the Climate Change Action Plan as part of the Yukon government’s commitment to address climate change in the territory, Environment Minister Elaine Taylor announced today.

“Climate change is a global challenge where all jurisdictions, including Yukon, have an important role to play,” Taylor said. “The Climate Change Action Plan identifies priority actions that will further enable us to respond to the challenges and opportunities most relevant to our northern setting.”

The Climate Change Action Plan recognizes many actions already underway and sets out 33 new or enhanced actions the Yukon government will undertake in support of enhancing knowledge and understanding of climate change; adapting to climate change; reducing greenhouse emissions; and leading Yukon action in response to climate change.

Development of the Action Plan included research, public workshops, meetings with stakeholders and over 100 written submissions from individuals and organizations.

Implementation of the Action Plan will involve all departments and agencies of the Yukon government. A Climate Change Secretariat will oversee the effective implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan and will provide government wide leadership and coordination on the Yukon government’s response. The Yukon government will be investing approximately \$600,000 for the creation of the Climate Change Secretariat, effective April 1, 2009.

“The Climate Change Action Plan will help us coordinate and improve our efforts to adapt to, understand and reduce our contributions to climate change,” Taylor added. “Living in a healthy environment is something we all want for one another, our families and future generations.”

The Climate Change Action Plan is available at territorial agents and Environment Yukon offices or can be downloaded from the Yukon government website, [www.gov.yk.ca](http://www.gov.yk.ca).

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Backgrounder attached

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## **BACKGROUND**

The climate change action plan builds upon the goals of the Climate Change Strategy and identifies the following priority actions to be implemented:

### **Goal 1 – Enhance Knowledge and Understanding of Climate Change**

- Establish a Yukon Research Centre of Excellence
- Establish climate change research study areas
- Develop climate scenarios

### **Goal 2 – Adapt to Climate Change**

- Complete a Yukon infrastructure risk and vulnerability assessment and determine adaptation strategies in response
- Develop an inventory of permafrost information for use in decision making
- Complete a Yukon water resources risk and vulnerability assessment
- Create a tool to facilitate the collection and distribution of water quantity and quality data
- Conduct a Yukon forest health risk assessment
- Conduct treatments to reduce forest fuel loads and protect communities
- Conduct a Yukon forest tree species and vulnerability assessment

### **Goal 3 – Reduce our Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

- Yukon government's internal operations: cap greenhouse gas (GHG) emission in 2010, reduce GHG emission by 20% by 2015 and become carbon neutral by 2020
- Report on Yukon government operations through 'The Climate Registry'
- Develop a carbon offset policy for internal operations
- Incorporate environmental performance considerations in the government's procurement decisions
- Government-funded new residential construction will meet GreenHome energy efficiency standards
- Government-funded commercial and institutional, construction and renovation will meet or exceed the LEED Certified Standard for energy efficiency
- Improve energy efficiency and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the government's light vehicle fleet
- Implement an Environmental Stewardship Initiative for the Department of Education and Yukon schools
- Establish 'green action committees' in all departments
- Conduct an energy analysis of all Yukon government buildings and complete energy saving retrofits
- Develop best management practices for industry to reduce GHG emissions
- Undertake an extensive study of the transportation sector and recommend options to reduce emissions
- Develop incentives for fuel efficient transportation
- Develop pilot projects to demonstrate home and commercial energy efficiency and heating technology
- Improve access to home energy evaluations by providing evaluator training
- Develop wood energy opportunities for residential and institutional heating

### **Goal 4 - Lead Yukon action in response to climate change**

- Forecast potential future GHG emissions for Yukon
- Work with federal partners to ensure national GHG Inventory is accurate and consistent for Yukon
- Set a Yukon-wide emissions target within two years

- Create a Climate Change Secretariat
- Determine the potential of a Yukon carbon economy
- Incorporate climate change considerations into government decision making
- Create a community engagement forum for taking action on climate change