



Pacific Institute  
for Climate Solutions  
Knowledge. Insight. Action.

## MEDIA RELEASE

January 23, 2014

### Putting the brakes on climate change – new free online course shows how

A new online, animated course released today by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) outlines an arsenal of practical methods and policy options for successfully combating human-induced climate change.

The three-part interactive lesson on *Mitigation Needs and Action* and *Government Tools and Initiatives Part I & II* informs users about existing technologies and approaches for reducing heat-trapping greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere. The course is the latest free product in the “Climate Insights 101” education series created by PICS, a consortium of British Columbia’s (BC’s) four leading research universities.

PICS executive director Tom Pedersen says human society is on track for perhaps four or more degrees of warming by the end of this century due to rising GHG emissions, well beyond the threshold seen as dangerous. However, he says, if urgent action is taken there is still time to prevent this happening—and the new online course explains how.

*Mitigation Needs and Action* explores the key strategies for reducing GHG emissions:

- energy efficiency – optimising the use of energy per unit of GDP, by switching to less carbon-intensive sources of energy, including renewables such as wind, solar, hydro and biomass
- energy conservation – changing behaviour so we use less energy, e.g. within buildings and in transit
- carbon sinks – storage of carbon emissions through low-tech options such as reforestation or through new technology that captures carbon dioxide from smokestacks and stores it underground.

The *Government Tools and Initiatives Part I* critiques the policies and tools used by governments around the world and within BC to account for and manage GHG emissions. Topics include carbon pricing through carbon tax and cap-and-trade schemes; environmental regulations such as vehicle tailpipe and low carbon fuel standards; renewable portfolio standards for utility companies whereby a set proportion of energy must come from renewable sources; and incentives for clean energy investment.

*Part 2* examines the mixed results of regional and international cooperative efforts toward achieving global GHG emissions reductions. Approaches under the microscope include emissions trading schemes, regional emissions caps, and the United Nation’s historic climate agreements from Kyoto, Copenhagen, Durban and Doha. The course also profiles countries with leading-edge policies that are successfully fighting the causes of climate change. All parts of the course contain “test-your-knowledge” sections.

Pedersen says there is no single solution to global warming, but this course shows there is an array of actions that, if taken, will transition society from fossil-fuel dependency to a low-carbon renewable energy future.

**Editors:** See endorsements of the new mitigation course from industry, government, and climate change leaders on the following page. View at course at <http://www.pics.uvic.ca> or under the PICS education page.

**Media contact:** Robyn Meyer (PICS Senior Communications Officer) at 250-588-4053 or [rmeyer@uvic.ca](mailto:rmeyer@uvic.ca).



## **Reviewers' comments: Mitigation Needs and Action, and Government Tools and Initiatives Part I & II**

*"An important course on climate change by skilled educators who understand the science of communication and the need for a well informed and engaged public."*

**Jim Hoggan**, Chair of the **David Suzuki Foundation** and Founder of DesmogBlog.

*"Taking action against climate change will yield great economic opportunities for BC. This course sheds light on how that can be accomplished, and will be a valuable resource for all Canadians."*

**Jonathan Rhone**, Chair, **BC Cleantech CEO Alliance**; President & CEO, Axine Water Technologies

*"While much of the material available about the climate crisis is either inaccessible to the layman or made accessible through over-simplification, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions has developed a clear, understandable and accurate picture of the situation in which we find ourselves, a positive vision of the future and the tools we need to get there. This course is highly recommended!!"*

**Elizabeth May**, Leader of the **Green Party of Canada**, Member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands

*"With the science of climate change becoming increasingly clear and urgent, the new PICS course is a valuable and timely source of information. It helps participants learn about the technologies and government actions that will give society the best chance of avoiding the most dangerous impacts of climate change."*

**Matt Horne**, director of the **Pembina Institute** Climate Change program

*"The Climate Insights 101 course by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions explains the complex, multi-faceted issue of mitigation in a straightforward, accessible manner, providing an immensely useful overview for those seeking to better understand how we might avoid the dangerous impacts of climate change."*

**John Cook**, creator and manager of the influential award-winning **Skeptical Science** website, and Climate Change Communication Fellow for the Global Change Institute at the University of Queensland.

*"Energy conservation, energy efficiency, and clean energy are the foundation upon which we can build a sustainable, low-carbon future - this latest course from PICS speaks to this well as it does about the mitigation options currently available to help deal with the challenge of climate change. Solving this challenge also creates tremendous business opportunities that can help grow a clean and sustainable economy."*

**Mossadiq S. Umedaly**, Serial Cleantech Entrepreneur - **Ballard Power Systems**, **Xantrex Technology**, **Enecsys**, **Wellington Partners Venture Capital**, **Electronics Recycling Services**, and past Chairman of **BC Hydro**