



The Daily Gleaner

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A Very Important Letter to Santa

Dear Santa,

I've been a good boy this year, so I hope you are able to help me out with a really big gift this Christmas. This is not a present just for me, but rather a gift that everyone needs – a healthy planet for generations to come.

And this gift is also for you. You see Santa, if we do not soon slow down the pace of global warming there is a good chance that your home, the North Pole, will be under water before this century ends. It is one thing for the polar bears to have no home, but you, Santa? That would be just as tragic.

The things on my Christmas Wish List don't come in a box or a bag, you can't wrap them or tie them with a bow. They are BIG, Santa, and they really matter - because if they come true they ensure that you can continue to live at the North Pole for centuries to come.

Santa, please help us make our homes more energy efficient, help us construct new buildings that have less environmental impact, help us travel more efficiently, help us use more renewable energy, and help us capture carbon in large fossil fuel based generating stations.

These things will help reduce our impact on global warming. However, what we really need is (o.k. Santa, this is a biggie!): the will of governments, the will of industry, and the will of every individual to make it happen. How can you possibly make that happen?

First of all, federal governments around the world must agree to put a cap on greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). In other words, they need to agree to limit the amount of fossil fuels each country is allowed to burn. Governments do this now for hundreds of hazardous chemicals, for the health and safety of people and the environment. They can do it for GHGs too. Governments can do this by charging more for carbon-based energy and encouraging industry and individuals to move towards more sustainable energy sources such as wind, solar and hydro power.

Many provincial, state and municipal governments are taking a lead on reducing greenhouse gas emissions – they are not waiting for their federal counterparts to take decisive action, they are implementing progressive programs and policies that are making a difference. Municipal governments, such as the City of Fredericton, should get a nice Christmas present this year from you Santa for the good work they are doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our beautiful city.

Santa, your gift to businesses this year should be to help them become more efficient in they way they use energy. There is always room for improvement - from more efficient lighting and heating systems to more insulation in their buildings.

Gifts this year for homeowners can include programmable thermostats, compact fluorescent light bulbs, and low flow showerheads. In fact, Santa, you have a helper this year – Efficiency New Brunswick; they will help homeowners save money while saving energy.

But more importantly, people can help you, Santa, by doing more than replacing light bulbs. We all need to learn more. We can insist that our governments do more; we can demand that our employers do more, and we can encourage our friends and neighbours to do more.

Santa, the North Pole has always been your home, and from what I gather you live 'off the grid' (you know - candles for light; fire and fur suit for warmth). And even though you travel all over the world in one night, your impact on the environment is minimal, thanks to Rudolph and the other reindeer. I, for one, admire your low carbon footprint and want to make sure that you continue to live at the North Pole for many years to come.

Thanks for considering my list Santa, and you can keep it on file because it will be the same next year . . . and the next . . .

Sincerely your friend,

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