

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA
(ON APPEAL FROM THE COURT OF APPEAL FOR SASKATCHEWAN)

**IN THE MATTER OF THE *GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT*, Bill C-74,
Part V**

**AND IN THE MATTER OF A REFERENCE BY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN
COUNCIL TO THE COURT OF APPEAL UNDER *THE CONSTITUTIONAL
QUESTIONS ACT*, 2012, SS 2012, c C-29.01.**

B E T W E E N :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR SASKATCHEWAN

Appellant

- and -

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR CANADA

Respondent

- and -

**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ONTARIO, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF QUÉBEC,
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW BRUNSWICK, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF
MANITOBA, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, ATTORNEY
GENERAL OF ALBERTA, AND OTHER INTERVENERS¹**

Interveners

(Style of cause continued on next pages)

FACTUM OF THE INTERVENER, CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

(Pursuant to Rule 42 of the *Rules of the Supreme Court of Canada*)

GOLDBLATT PARTNERS LLP

20 Dundas Street West, Suite 1039
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C2

Simon Archer

Mariam Moktar

Daniel Sheppard

Tel: 416-977-6070

Fax: 416-591-7333

Email: sarcher@goldblattpartners.com

GOLDBLATT PARTNERS LLP

30 Metcalfe Street, Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5L4

Colleen Bauman

Tel: 613-482-2463

Fax: 613-235-3041

Email: cbauman@goldblattpartners.com

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Canadian Labour Congress**

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Canadian Labour Congress**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA
(ON APPEAL FROM THE COURT OF APPEAL FOR ONTARIO)

**IN THE MATTER OF THE *GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT*, SC 2018,
c 12, s 186**

**AND IN THE MATTER OF A REFERENCE BY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN
COUNCIL TO THE ONTARIO COURT OF APPEAL UNDER THE *COURTS OF
JUSTICE ACT*, RSO 1990, c C.34, s 8**

B E T W E E N :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR ONTARIO

Appellant

- and -

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR CANADA

Respondent

- and -

**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF SASKATCHEWAN, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF
QUÉBEC, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW BRUNSWICK, ATTORNEY GENERAL
OF MANITOBA, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, ATTORNEY
GENERAL OF ALBERTA, AND OTHER INTERVENERS²**

Interveners

FACTUM OF THE INTERVENER, CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS
(Pursuant to Rule 42 of the *Rules of the Supreme Court of Canada*)

GOLDBLATT PARTNERS LLP
20 Dundas Street West, Suite 1039
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C2

Simon Archer
Mariam Moktar
Daniel Sheppard
Tel: 416-977-6070
Fax: 416-591-7333
Email: sarcher@goldblattpartners.com

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Canadian Labour Congress
(38663 & 38781)**

GOLDBLATT PARTNERS LLP
30 Metcalfe Street, Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5L4

Colleen Bauman
Tel: 613-482-2463
Fax: 613-235-3041
Email: cbauman@goldblattpartners.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Canadian Labour Congress
(38663 & 38781)**

APPENDIX OF OTHER INTERVENERS

¹ For File Number SCC No. 38663: **PROGRESS ALBERTA COMMUNICATIONS; CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS; SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORPORATION AND SASKENERGY INCORPORATED; OCEANS NORTH CONSERVATION SOCIETY; ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS; CANADIAN TAXPAYERS FEDERATION; CANADA'S ECOFISCAL COMMISSION; CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE CANADA INC. AND SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL; AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADA; NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN AND THE LAW AND FRIENDS OF THE EARTH; INTERNATIONAL EMISSIONS TRADING ASSOCIATION; DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION; ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION; SMART PROSPERITY INSTITUTE; CANADIAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION; CLIMATE JUSTICE SASKATOON, NATIONAL FARMERS UNION, SASKATCHEWAN COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SASKATCHEWAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, SASKATCHEWAN ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY, SASKEV, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS: PRAIRIE AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES REGION, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS: REGINA CHAPTER, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS: SASKATOON CHAPTER, NEW-BRUNSWICK ANTISHALE GAS ALLIANCE AND YOUTH OF THE EARTH; CENTRE QUÉBÉCOIS DU DROIT DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET ÉQUITERRE; GENERATION SQUEEZE, PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, SASKATCHEWAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, CANADIAN COALITION FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH CLIMATE LAB; ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA CHIEFS; AND CITY OF RICHMOND, CITY OF VICTORIA, CITY OF NELSON, DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH, CITY OF ROSSLAND AND CITY OF VANCOUVER**

² For File Number SCC No. 38781: **PROGRESS ALBERTA COMMUNICATIONS; ANISHINABEK NATION AND UNITED CHIEFS AND COUNCILS OF MNIDOO MNISING; CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS; SASKATCHEWAN POWER CORPORATION AND SASKENERGY INCORPORATED; OCEANS NORTH CONSERVATION SOCIETY; ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS; CANADIAN TAXPAYERS FEDERATION; CANADA'S ECOFISCAL COMMISSION; CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE CANADA INC. AND SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL; AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADA; NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN AND THE LAW AND FRIENDS OF THE EARTH; INTERNATIONAL EMISSIONS TRADING ASSOCIATION; DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION; ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION; SMART PROSPERITY INSTITUTE; CANADIAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION; CLIMATE JUSTICE SASKATOON, NATIONAL FARMERS UNION, SASKATCHEWAN COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SASKATCHEWAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, SASKATCHEWAN ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY, SASKEV, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS: PRAIRIE AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES REGION, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS: REGINA CHAPTER, COUNCIL OF CANADIANS: SASKATOON CHAPTER, NEW-BRUNSWICK ANTISHALE GAS ALLIANCE AND YOUTH OF THE EARTH; CENTRE QUÉBÉCOIS DU DROIT DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET ÉQUITERRE; GENERATION SQUEEZE, PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, SASKATCHEWAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, CANADIAN COALITION FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH CLIMATE LAB; ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA CHIEFS; AND CITY OF RICHMOND, CITY OF VICTORIA, CITY OF NELSON, DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH, CITY OF ROSSLAND AND CITY OF VANCOUVER**

TO:

THE REGISTRAR

301 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0J1

COPIES TO:

**ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR
SASKATCHEWAN**

820 - 1874 Scarth St
Aboriginal Law Branch
Regina, Saskatchewan S3P 3B3

P. Mitch McAdam, Q.C.

Alan Jacobson

Deron Kuski, Q.C.

Tel: (306) 787-7846

Fax: (306) 787-9111

Email: mitch.mcadam@gov.sk.ca

**Counsel for the Appellant,
Attorney General for Saskatchewan (38663)
and Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General for Saskatchewan (38781)**

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ONTARIO

Constitutional Law Branch
720 Bay Street, 4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2S9

Joshua Hunter

Padraic Ryan

Aud Ranalli

Tel: (416) 908-7465

Fax: (416) 326-4015

Email: joshua.hunter@ontario.ca

**Counsel for the Appellant,
Attorney General of Ontario (38781)
and Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Ontario (38663)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP

160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

D. Lynne Watt

Tel: (613) 786-8695

Fax: (613) 788-3509

Email: lynne.watt@gowlingwlg.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Appellant,
Attorney General for Saskatchewan (38663)
and Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General for Saskatchewan (38781)**

SUPREME ADVOCACY LLP

100- 340 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R3

Marie-France Major

Tel: (613) 695-8855 Ext: 102

Fax: (613) 695-8580

Email: mfmajor@supremeadvocacy.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Appellant,
Attorney General of Ontario (38781)
and Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Ontario (38663)**

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA
Prairie Regional Office
301-310 Broadway Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0S6

Sharlene Telles-Langdon
Christine Mohr
Mary Matthews
Neil Goodridge
Tel: (204) 983-0862
Fax: (204) 984-8495
Email: Sharlene.Telles-Langdon@justice.gc.ca

Counsel for the Respondent,
Attorney General of Canada
(38663 & 38781)

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
1001 Douglas Street, 6th Floor
PO Box 9280 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9J7

J. Gareth Morley
Tel: (250) 952-7644
Fax: (250) 356-0064
Email: gareth.morley@gov.bc.ca

Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General of British Columbia
(38663 & 38781)

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW BRUNSWICK
675 King Street, Suite 2018
P.O. Box 6000, Stn. A.
Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5H1

Isabel Lavoie-Daigle
Rachelle Standing
Tel: (506) 238-1652
Fax: (506) 453-3275
Email: isabel.lavoiedaigle@gnb.ca

Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General of New Brunswick
(38663 & 38781)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8

Christopher Rupar
Tel: (613) 670-6290
Fax: (613) 954-1920
Email: christopher.rupar@justice.gc.ca

Ottawa Agent for the Respondent,
Attorney General of Canada
(38663 & 38781)

MICHAEL J. SOBKIN
331 Somerset Street West
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0J8

Tel: (613) 282-1712
Fax: (613) 288-2896
Email: msobkin@sympatico.ca

Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General of British Columbia
(38663 & 38781)

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP
160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

D. Lynne Watt
Tel: (613) 786-8695
Fax: (613) 788-3509
Email: lynne.watt@gowlingwlg.com

Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General of New Brunswick
(38663 & 38781)

GALL LEGGE GRANT ZWACK LLP

1199 West Hastings Street
Suite 1000
Vancouver, British Columbia V6E 3T5

Peter A. Gall, Q.C.

Tel: (604) 891-1152
Fax: (604) 669-5101
Email: pgall@glgzlaw.com

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Alberta
(38663 & 38781)**

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MANITOBA

Constitutional Law
1230 - 405 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3L6

Michael Conner

Allison Kindle Pejovic

Tel: (204) 945-6723
Fax: (204) 945-0053
Email: michael.conner@gov.mb.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Manitoba
(38663 & 38781)**

**PROCUREURE GÉNÉRALE DU
QUÉBEC**

Ministère de la justice du Québec
1200 Route de l'Église, 4e étage
Québec, Quebec G1V 4M1

Jean-Vincent Lacroix

Tel: (418) 643-1477 Ext: 20779
Fax: (418) 644-7030
Email: jean-vincent.lacroix@justice.gouv.qc.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Quebec
(38663 & 38781)**

CAZASAIKALEY LLP

350 - 220 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5Z9

Alyssa Tomkins

Tel: (613) 564-8269
Fax: (613) 565-2087
Email: atomkins@plaideurs.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Alberta
(38663 & 38781)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP

160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

D. Lynne Watt

Tel: (613) 786-8695
Fax: (613) 788-3509
Email: lynne.watt@gowlingwlg.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Manitoba
(38663 & 38781)**

NOËL & ASSOCIÉS

111, rue Champlain
Gatineau, Quebec J8X 3R1

Pierre Landry

Tel: (819) 503-2178
Fax: (819) 771-5397
Email: p.landry@noelassocies.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Attorney General of Quebec
(38663 & 38781)**

NANDA & COMPANY
3400 Manulife Place
10180 – 101 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4K1

Avnish Nanda
Martin Olszynski
Tel: (780) 801-5324
Fax: (587-318-1391
Email: avnish@nandalaw.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Progress Alberta Communications Limited
(38663 & 38781)**

WESTAWAY LAW GROUP
55 Murray Street
Suite 230
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3

Cynthia Westaway
M. Patricia Lawrence
Tel: (613) 722-6339
Fax: (613) 722-9097
E-mail: cynthia@westawaylaw.ca

**Counsel for the Interveners, Anishinabek
Nation and United Chiefs and Councils of
Mnidoon Mnising (38781)**

McKERCHER LLP
374 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 1M5

David M.A. Stack, Q.C.
Tel: (306) 664-1277
Fax: (306) 653-2669
Email: d.stack@mckercher.ca

**Counsel for the Interveners,
Saskatchewan Power Corporation and
SaskEnergy Incorporated
(38663 & 38781)**

McGUINITY LAW OFFICES
1192 Rockingham Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 8A7

Dylan JR McGuinity
Tel: (613) 526-3858
Fax: (613) 526-3187
E-Mail: dylanjr@mcguintylaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Progress Alberta Communications Limited
(38663 & 38781)**

WESTAWAY LAW GROUP
55 Murray Street
Suite 230
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3

Geneviève Boulay
Tel: (613) 702-3042
Fax: (613) 722-9097
E-mail: genevieve@westawaylaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
Anishinabek Nation and United Chiefs and
Councils of Mnidoon Mnising (38781)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP
160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

D. Lynne Watt
Tel: (613) 786-8695
Fax: (613) 788-3509
Email: lynne.watt@gowlingwlg.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
Saskatchewan Power Corporation and
SaskEnergy Incorporated
(38663 & 38781)**

ARVAY FINLAY LLP
1512-808 Nelson Street
Vancouver, British Columbia V6Z 2H2

David W. Wu
Tel: (604) 696-9828
Fax: (888) 575-3281
E-mail: dwu@arvayfinlay.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Oceans North Conservation Society
(38663 & 38781)**

ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS
55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5

Stuart Wuttke
Julie McGregor
Adam Williamson
Victor Carter
Tel: (613) 241-6789, Ext: 228
Fax: (613) 241-5808
E-mail: swuttke@afn.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Assembly of First Nations
(38663 & 38781)**

CREASE HARMAN LLP
#800-1070 Douglas Street
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 2C4

R. Bruce E. Hallsor
Hana Felix
Tel: (250) 388-9124
Fax: (250) 388-4294
E-mail: Bhallsor@crease.com

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Canadian Taxpayers Federation
(38663 & 38781)**

SUPREME LAW GROUP
900 – 275 Slater Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9

Moira Dillon
Tel: (613) 691-1224
Fax: (613) 691-1338
Email: mdillon@supremelawgroup.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Oceans North Conservation Society
(38663 & 38781)**

SUPREME LAW GROUP
900 – 275 Slater Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9

Moira Dillon
Tel: (613) 691-1224
Fax: (613) 691-1338
Email: mdillon@supremelawgroup.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Assembly of First Nations
(38663 & 38781)**

SUPREME ADVOCACY LLP
100- 340 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R3

Marie-France Major
Tel: (613) 695-8855 Ext: 102
Fax: (613) 695-8580
Email: mfmajor@supremeadvocacy.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Canadian Taxpayers Federation
(38663 & 38781)**

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Faculty of Law
57 Louis Pasteur Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

Stewart Elgie

Tel: (613) 562-5800, Ext: 1270
E-mail: stewart.elgie@uottawa.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Canada's Ecofiscal Commission
(38663 & 38781)**

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
ASSOCIATION**

1500 - 55 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2H7

Joseph F. Castrilli

Theresa McClenaghan

Richard D. Lindgren

Tel: (416) 960-2284, Ext: 7218
Fax: (416) 960-9392
E-mail: castrillij@sympatico.ca

**Counsel for the Interveners,
Canadian Environmental Law Association,
Environmental Defence Canada Inc., and
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
(38663 & 38781)**

STOCKWOODS LLP

TD North Tower, suite 4130
77 King Street West, P.O. Box 140
Toronto, Ontario M5K 1H1

Justin Safayeni

Zacharay Al-Khatib

Tel: (416) 593-7200
Fax: (416) 593-9345
E-mail: justins@stockwoods.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Amnesty International Canada
(38663 & 38781)**

CHAMP AND ASSOCIATES

43 Florence Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0W6

Bijon Roy

Tel: (613) 237-4740
Fax: (613) 232-2680
Email: broy@champlaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Canada's Ecofiscal Commission
(38663 & 38781)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP

160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

Jeffrey W. Beedell

Tel: (613) 786-0171
Fax: (613) 788-3587
Email: jeff.beedell@gowlingwlg.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
Canadian Environmental Law Association,
Environmental Defence Canada Inc., and
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
(38663 & 38781)**

CONWAY BAXTER WILSON LLP

400-411 Roosevelt Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2A 3X9

David Taylor

Tel: (613) 691-0368
Fax: (613) 688-0271
Email: dtaylor@conway.pro

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Amnesty International Canada
(38663 & 38781)**

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
57 Louis Pasteur St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6C5

Nathalie Chalifour
Anne Levesque
Tel: (613) 562-5800, Ext: 3331
Fax: (613) 562-5124
E-mail: Nathalie.Chalifour@uottawa.ca

**Counsel for the Interveners,
National Association of Women and the
Law and Friends of the Earth
(38663 & 38781)**

DEMARCO ALLAN LLP
333 Bay Street
Suite 625
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2R2

Elisabeth DeMarco
Jonathan McGillivray
Tel: (647) 991-1190
Fax: (888) 734-9459
E-mail: lisa@demarcoallan.com

**Counsel for the Intervener,
International Emissions Trading Association
(38663 & 38781)**

**ECOJUSTICE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
CLINIC - UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA**
216-1 Stewart Street
Faculty of Law - Common Law
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

Joshua Ginsberg
Randy Christensen
Tel: (613) 562-5800, Ext: 3399
Fax: (613) 562-5319
E-mail: jginsberg@ecojustice.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
David Suzuki Foundation
(38663 & 38781)**

CONWAY BAXTER WILSON LLP
400-411 Roosevelt Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2A 3X9

Marion Sandilands
Tel: (613) 288-0149
Fax: (613) 688-0271
Email: msandilands@conway.pro

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
National Association of Women and the
Law and Friends of the Earth
(38663 & 38781)**

**ECOJUSTICE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
CLINIC - UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA**

216-1 Stewart Street
Faculty of Law - Common Law
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

Amir Attaran

Tel: (613) 562-5800, Ext: 3382
Fax: (613) 562-5319
E-mail: aattaran@ecojustice.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
(38663 & 38781)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP

Suite 1600, 1 First Canadian Place
100 King Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5X 1G5

Jennifer L. King

Michael Finley

Liane Langstaff

Tel: (416) 862-7525
Fax: (416) 862-7661
E-mail: jennifer.king@gowlingwlg.com

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Canadian Public Health Association
(38663 & 38781)**

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Faculty of Law
57 Louis Pasteur Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6C5

Jeremy De Beer

Tel: (613) 562-5800, Ext: 3169
E-mail: Jeremy.debeer@uOttawa.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Smart Prosperity Institute
(38663 & 38781)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP

160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

Jeffrey W. Beedell

Tel: (613) 786-0171
Fax: (613) 788-3587
Email: jeff.beedell@gowlingwlg.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Canadian Public Health Association
(38663 & 38781)**

GOWLING WLG (CANADA) LLP

160 Elgin Street
Suite 2600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1C3

Guy Régimbald

Tel: (613) 786-0197
Fax: (613) 563-9869
Email: guy.regimbald@gowlingwlg.com

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Smart Prosperity Institute
(38663 & 38781)**

STOCKDALE LAW

#52 158 2nd Ave N
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2B2

Larry Kowalchuk

Taylor-Anne Yee

Jonathan Stockdale

Tel: (306) 880-9889

Fax: (306) 931-9889

Email: larry@kowalchuklaw.ca

**Counsel for the Interveners,
Climate Justice Saskatoon, National
Farmers Union, Saskatchewan Coalition for
Sustainable Development, Saskatchewan
Counsel for International Cooperation,
Saskatchewan Environmental Society,
SaskEV, Council of Canadians: Prairie and
Northwest Territories Region, Council of
Canadians: Regina Chapter, Council of
Canadians: Saskatoon Chapter, New-
Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance and
Youth of the Earth
(38663 & 38781)**

MICHEL BÉLANGER AVOCATS INC.

454 avenue Laurier Est
Montréal, Quebec H2J 1E7

David Robitaille

Marc Bishai

Tel: (514) 991-9005

Fax: (514) 844-7009

E-mail: david.robaille@uottawa.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Centre québécois du droit de
l'environnement et Équiterre
(38663 & 38781)**

SUPREME LAW GROUP

900 – 275 Slater Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H9

Moira Dillon

Tel: (613) 691-1224

Fax: (613) 691-1338

Email: mdillon@supremelawgroup.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
Climate Justice Saskatoon, National
Farmers Union, Saskatchewan Coalition for
Sustainable Development, Saskatchewan
Counsel for International Cooperation,
Saskatchewan Environmental Society,
SaskEV, Council of Canadians: Prairie and
Northwest Territories Region, Council of
Canadians: Regina Chapter, Council of
Canadians: Saskatoon Chapter, New-
Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance and
Youth of the Earth
(38663 & 38781)**

JURISTES POWER

1103 – 130 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4

Maxine Vincelette

Phone: (613) 702-5560

Fax: (613) 702-5560

Email: mvincelette@powerlaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Centre québécois du droit de
l'environnement et Équiterre
(38663 & 38781)**

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

200 - 393 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3H6

Joëlle Pastora Sala

Byron Williams

Katrine Dilay

Tel: (204) 985-8540

Fax: (204) 985-8544

E-mail: jopas@pilc.mb.ca

**Counsel for the Intervener,
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
(38663 & 38781)**

RATCLIFF & COMPANY LLP

221 West Esplanade
Suite 500
North Vancouver, British Columbia V7M 3J3

Nathan Hume

Emma Hume

Cam Brewer

Tel: (604) 988-5201

Fax: (604) 988-1452

E-mail: nhume@ratcliff.com

**Counsel for the Interveners,
Generation Squeeze, Public Health
Association of British Columbia,
Saskatchewan Public Health Association,
Canadian Association of Physicians for the
Environment, Canadian Coalition for the
Rights of the Child and Youth Climate Lab
(38663 & 38781)**

POWER LAW

1103 – 130 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4

Maxine Vincelette

Phone: (613) 702-5560

Fax: (613) 702-5560

Email: mvincelette@powerlaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Intervener,
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
(38663 & 38781)**

POWER LAW

1103 – 130 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4

Darius Bossé

Phone: (613) 702-5566

Fax: (613) 702-5566

Email: dbosse@powerlaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
Generation Squeeze, Public Health
Association of British Columbia,
Saskatchewan Public Health Association,
Canadian Association of Physicians for the
Environment, Canadian Coalition for the
Rights of the Child and Youth Climate Lab
(38663 & 38781)**

LIDSTONE & COMPANY

Sun Tower, Suite 1300
128 Pender Street West
Vancouver, BC V6B 1R8

Paul A. Hildebrand

Olivia French

Tel: (604) 899-2269

Fax: (604) 899-2281

E-mail: hildebrand@lidstone.ca

**Counsel for the Interveners,
City of Richmond, City of Victoria, City of
Nelson, District of Squamish, City of
Rossland and City of Vancouver
(38663 & 38781)**

POWER LAW

1103 – 130 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4

Maxine Vincelette

Phone: (613) 702-5560

Fax: (613) 702-5560

Email: mvincelette@powerlaw.ca

**Ottawa Agent for the Interveners,
City of Richmond, City of Victoria, City of
Nelson, District of Squamish, City of
Rossland and City of Vancouver
(38663 & 38781)**

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PART I – OVERVIEW

1. Global climate change poses a catastrophic threat to the health, safety and wellbeing of all Canadians. Major natural disasters, famine and life threatening disease are only some of the consequences that flow from climate change, and Canadians are already feeling their effects today.¹ All of the parties agree that climate change demands responses from all levels of government,² and recognize that decades of persistent inaction have brought humanity to a crisis point that demands urgent action. There can be no dispute that climate change presents an emergency unlike any we have seen before.

2. The decisions of this Court and the Privy Council under the emergency branch of the Peace, Order and Good Government (POGG) power have not previously dealt with emergencies like the one posed by climate change. The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) intervenes to assist the Court in understanding how Parliament’s response to the climate emergency – the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act (GGPPA)* – is valid law under the emergency branch.

PART II – POSITION ON QUESTIONS IN ISSUE

3. The CLC submits that the *GGPPA* should be upheld as constitutionally valid under the emergency branch of Parliament’s POGG jurisdiction.

PART III – STATEMENT OF ARGUMENT

4. The CLC agrees with the submissions of the David Suzuki Foundation (DSF) that Parliament enacted the *GGPPA* in response to a reasonable apprehension of an emergency; indeed, as detailed in the factums of the federal government and many supporting interveners, the evidence of an emergency climate crisis is overwhelming on any legal standard. The CLC is also in substantial agreement with the DSF that the temporariness requirement under the emergency branch of POGG does not require a specific or fixed end-date embedded in a statute, and that the *Paris Agreement*’s timelines provide adequate indicia of temporariness in this case.

¹ Reasons of the Court of Appeal for Ontario [*Ontario Reasons*] at para 11, **Ontario Record [ORec], Vol. I, Tab 1, pp. 5-6** (citing effects including spread of life threatening disease, famine and major natural disasters).

² Factum of the Attorney General of Ontario at para 1, fn 1; Factum of the Attorney General of Saskatchewan at para 2.

But in the CLC's submission, even if the *GGPPA* were to continue in force beyond 2030, it would still meet any temporariness requirement under the POGG emergency power.

5. The CLC's submissions focus on the reality that the climate emergency is fundamentally different than the kinds of emergencies that existed when Parliament previously exercised its emergency powers, and that the nature of these differences are relevant in assessing whether the temporariness requirement has been met.

6. The crux of the current climate emergency is that of a collective action problem – a structural failure to take steps in the collective interest that is difficult to solve. The *GGPPA* is a backstop that is designed to address the existing failure of collective action, one that will fall away once the structural barriers to collective action are overcome. The timelines for this may be longer than in previous emergencies, and the end point uncertain, but contrary to the views of some of the justices in the courts below,³ this does not mean that the *GGPPA* is not temporary.

7. An approach to temporariness that is flexible enough to account for different kinds of emergencies, and the measures necessary to combat them, is not an invitation to accept permanent states of exceptionalism. The reality that modern democracies face new and evolving kinds of crises reinforces the fact that emergency responses must still be subject to the rule of law. Courts play a critical role in ensuring compliance with the limited and exceptional scope of the emergency branch of POGG.

A. DIFFERENT EMERGENCIES REQUIRE DIFFERENT EMERGENCY RESPONSES

8. The emergency branch of POGG largely developed out of Canada's response to the two world wars.⁴ This war-time context naturally informed how this Court and the Privy Council shaped the doctrine, including the requirement of temporariness.

9. While war and insurrection are the archetypical emergencies that have confronted states, they are not the *only* emergencies that a state may have to confront.⁵ Modern states face a range

³ Reasons of the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan at para 202, **Saskatchewan Record, Vol I, Tab 1, p 61**; *Ontario Reasons*, *supra* note 1 at para 215 (Huscroft JA, dissenting), **ORec, Vol I, Tab 1, p 83**.

⁴ *Fort Frances Pulp and Paper Co v Manitoba Free Press Co*, [1923] 3 DLR 629 (PC); *Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians v Attorney General of Canada*, [1947] 1 DLR 577 (PC); *Reference re Wartime Leasehold Regulations*, [1950] SCR 124.

of emergencies that are qualitatively different from the classic example of war, but are equally as threatening to the life, health and future existence of the state and its citizens as war. These new crises may well demand that states adopt new kinds of emergency responses that are properly tailored to the dynamics of the underlying emergency.⁶

10. This reality has posed a challenge in developing the emergency branch of POGG. This Court's first (and, until now, only) case to present a non-war emergency situation was the *Anti-Inflation Reference*. Facing an invocation of the emergency branch unconnected to war, this Court became heavily divided, expressing divergent views on basic aspects of the doctrine.⁷

11. While difficult to apply to novel kinds of threats, the emergency branch must nevertheless evolve and be applied in a manner that permits Parliament to take effective action to protect the continued existence and wellbeing of the Canadian people. In applying the tests that underpin the emergency branch of POGG, courts must be sensitive to the particular character of the emergency being confronted. This does not mean that the basic structure of the emergency branch requires wholesale revision. Rather, it means that when applying that doctrine, courts must be sensitive to the reality that emergency responses to war, inflation or climate change are necessarily going to be different. But, in all cases, Parliament must have the authority to act.

B. THE CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY: A COLLECTIVE ACTION PROBLEM

12. Understanding the *GGPPA* as an emergency response to climate change requires a clear understanding of the nature of the climate change emergency itself. Clearly the *consequences* of climate change are sufficiently serious to satisfy any rational definition of what constitutes an "emergency". However, it is also important to understand what the *causes* of the emergency are, not in the sense of the mechanics of atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs), but in the sense of why the planet has reached such a crisis point notwithstanding the clear and foreseeable dangers that have laid ahead. In this sense, understanding the cause of the climate crisis helps to explain the basic architecture of the *GGPPA*, and reveals how it is a fundamentally temporary law.

⁵ See e.g. *Reference re Anti-Inflation Act*, [1976] 2 SCR 373 (inflation recognized as national emergency).

⁶ John Ferejohn & Pasquale Pasquino, "The law of the Exception: A Typology of Emergency Powers" (2004) 2 Intl J Const L 210.

⁷ See e.g. Edward P Belobaba, "Disputed "Emergencies" and the Scope of Judicial Review: Yet Another Implication of the Anti-Inflation Act Reference" (1977) 15 OHLJ 406, and the literature cited therein.

13. Reducing GHG emissions and fighting global climate change has been a difficult endeavour because it represents a massive collective action problem. Collective action problems arise in situations where the collective interests of a group are best served by coordinated efforts between its members, but where each individual member of the group lacks the incentives to engage in such coordinated conduct. Individual members have strong incentives not to act, and the failure to act results in harms to the group as a whole.

14. Collective action problems are most common in the production of public goods. A public good is one that is non-excludible, meaning that once produced it is effectively impossible to prevent others from enjoying its benefits. A classic example is a lighthouse: once built, there is no way to prevent anyone from benefiting from it, even if they did not contribute to its creation.⁸

15. The non-excludability of public goods results in the “free riding”. Members of a group have an individual incentive to not contribute to the production of public goods when they can benefit from them whether or not they assume the costs of producing them.⁹ This may result in no members of the group having sufficient incentive to produce a good alone; ultimately it is not produced and no one benefits.¹⁰ This is the situation described by the “prisoner’s dilemma”: incentives that apply to each individual member of a group may result in a poor outcome for everyone. Everyone would be better off if they engaged in coordinated action, but there is no strong incentive for any individual member to do so.¹¹

16. Global climate change represents a classic but particularly acute free rider problem.¹² Sustainable levels of GHGs in the atmosphere is a public good. There is no way to exclude anyone from the benefits of a livable atmosphere, and the benefits of any one group’s GHG

⁸ Richard E Levy, “The Tie that Binds: Some Thoughts About the Rule of Law, Law and Economics, Collective Action Theory, Reciprocity, and Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle” (2008) 56 U Kan L Rev 901 at 906.

⁹ *Ibid* at 906; Lisa Schenck, “Climate Change Crisis - Struggling for Worldwide Collective Action” (2008) 19 Colo J of Intl Envl L & Pol’y 319 at 335; Sonia E Rolland, Amy Pimentel & Auroop Ganguly, “Taking Climate Change by Storm: Theorizing Global and Local Policy-Making in Response to Extreme Weather Events” (2014) 62 Buff L Rev 933 at 937.

¹⁰ Paul G Harris, “Collective Action on Climate Change: The Logic of Regime Failure” (2007) 47 Nat Resources J 195 at 201.

¹¹ Christopher Napoli, “A Decentralised Approach to Emissions Reductions” (2013) 7 Carbon & Climate L Rev 24 at 27.

¹² Harris, *supra* note 10 at 196; Napoli, *supra* note 11 at 27-28.

reductions are diffuse and enjoyed mostly by others.¹³ The costs of “producing” low GHG levels are high, not only in economic, but also in human and political terms. The CLC is acutely aware that transitioning to a low carbon economy carries the real risk of economic harms to vulnerable working people and communities. Governments have substantial interests in mitigating or avoiding these costs. These high costs coupled with limited individual benefits give both governmental and private actors every reason to engage in free riding.

17. In terms of reducing climate change, these problems are compounded by the phenomenon of “carbon leakage”, the process by which attempts in one jurisdiction to reduce GHG emissions through regulation results in pressures on firms and investors to move into or allocate capital to other jurisdictions with less stringent standards.¹⁴ The result is economic losses for those who take real steps to combat climate change, short-term gains to those who engage in jurisdiction-shopping, and little change in aggregate GHG emissions overall.

C. THE *GGPPA* IS A RESPONSE TO THE COLLECTIVE ACTION PROBLEM

18. Collective action problems are inherently difficult to solve. This is why climate change has evolved into a true existential threat. Modern societies are inflicting profound harms on themselves, but struggle to engage in the coordinated action necessary to stop it.

19. Solving collective action problems normally requires some outside influence that can alter the structural incentives and disincentives that lead individuals to free ride on one another.¹⁵ At the global level, such outside influences are difficult to locate. Absent a hegemonic power, or possibly a hierarchical institution like the EU, states are largely left with imperfect – but important – consent-based mechanisms like the *Paris Agreement*.¹⁶ The collective action problem has been so strong, however, that repeated attempts to devise consent-based mechanisms have failed, and brought the planet to the tipping point.

¹³ Napoli, *supra* note 11 at 27-28.

¹⁴ *Working Group on Carbon Pricing Mechanisms – Final Report* at 34, Exhibit R to the Affidavit of John Moffet, dated January 29, 2019, **Canada Record (Ontario Ref) [CanRec], Vol II, p. 667.**

¹⁵ Harris, *supra* note 10 at 200.

¹⁶ See *ibid* at 217; Rolland, *supra* note 9 at 971; *Paris Agreement*, Exhibit I to the Affidavit of John Moffet, dated January 29, 2019, **CanRec, Vol II, p. 344.**

20. The situation within Canada is in some ways like the international situation, but in other ways quite different. It is the same in the sense that the carbon-based economy creates a power structure that disincentivizes collective action. Each jurisdiction, while recognizing in good faith the importance of combating climate change, may have strong reasons to free ride off the efforts of other jurisdictions (both within and outside of Canada). These incentives may be so strong in practice that they make free riding effectively unavoidable, and largely explain the perplexingly slow, uncoordinated, and patchwork approach to reducing GHG emissions across Canada.¹⁷

21. However, the Federal Parliament's ability to legislate for the whole of Canada represents an important difference compared to the international sphere. The structure of the Canadian constitution provides a central national authority that can remove the ability of provinces and individual actors to engage in free riding. This is what the *GGPPA* does. It provides strong incentives for all members of the Canadian community to contribute to the production of the public good of lower GHG emissions resulting in fundamental and necessary structural change through a coordinated, pan-Canadian effort to confront the climate emergency.

22. The situation is conceptually analogous to the "provincial inability" test under the national concern branch of POGG. Provincial inability is a means of recognizing when a new and discrete matter has a national dimension, is beyond the power of the provinces to deal with, and failure by one province to address the matter will endanger the interests of another province.¹⁸ The provincial inability and barriers to provincial cooperation justifies the federal government's involvement in addressing the matter. Indeed, given the close relationship between the national concern and emergency branches of POGG, the fact that the provincial inability test closely mirrors the collective action problem underpinning the climate emergency provides substantial constitutional support for Parliament's choice to legislate in this manner under either head.

¹⁷ Nathalie J Chalifour "Jurisdictional Wrangling over Climate Policy in the Canadian Federation: Key Issues in the Provincial Constitutional Challenges to Parliament's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act" (2019) 50 *Ottawa L Rev* 201 at 207.

¹⁸ Dale Gibson, "Measuring "National Dimensions"" (1976) 7 *Man LJ* 15 at 33; *R v Crown Zellerbach Canada Ltd*, [1988] 1 SCR 401 at 433-434; *Schneider v The Queen*, [1982] 2 SCR 112 at 131; *R v Hydro-Québec*, [1997] 3 SCR 213 at 263-264.

D. THE *GGPPA* AS A BACKSTOP AGAINST THE FAILURE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

23. The *GGPPA* can best be understood as a response to the collective action problem that has produced the current climate emergency. Effective responses to the climate crisis require a coordinated, comprehensive set of carbon pricing responses across each of Canada’s provinces and territories. Such collective action is necessary to avoid free riding and ensure adequate production of the public good that is a livable, sustainable environment. This is an inherently difficult task to accomplish, as it requires profound structural change to the Canadian economy. But once such change has been accomplished, both locally and globally, the climate crisis will be addressed. The *GGPPA* is designed to serve as a mechanism that accounts for the inherent difficulty in taking collective against climate change. It is structured to encourage provinces and territories to act within their own constitutional competence to reduce GHG production, while removing the ability for anyone to engage in free riding of those efforts.

24. The *GGPPA* does not apply in all provinces. Parts 1 and 2 operate only within those jurisdictions listed in Schedule 1 to the *Act*. The Governor in Council has the authority to amend the schedules,¹⁹ and the legislation directs her to do so primarily on the basis of “the stringency of provincial pricing mechanisms for GHG emissions.”²⁰ Rather than lock in certain jurisdictions at the time of enactment, this de-scheduling power ensures that the *GGPPA* operates flexibly, only imposing its charges for so long as a jurisdiction fails to take its own action to price carbon. Where a province elects to take adequate action within its own heads of constitutional power, the Governor in Council would be required to take action to de-list that province from Schedule 1.

25. This means that, once the collective action problem is overcome, there would be no further constitutional justification for the *GGPPA* to continue to operate, at least under the emergency branch of POGG. And that is exactly how the *GGPPA* is designed to operate. If Canadian jurisdictions were to engage in the collective action required to solve the climate emergency, then no jurisdiction could justifiably be listed in Schedule 1 any longer. The charges imposed under Parts 1 and 2 of the *Act* would cease to have any further effect, and there would be no federal trenching on any provincial jurisdiction.

¹⁹ *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, SC 2018, c 12, s 186, ss 166(2), 189(1) [*GGPPA*].

²⁰ *GGPPA*, *supra*, ss. 166(3), 189(2).

26. To some extent this model is similar to (admittedly temporary) *War Measures Act*.²¹ During the inter-war period, the *War Measures Act* remained on the statute book, but stayed dormant as no regulations had been promulgated under it. When the Second World War began, it sprang back to life, following which it again became dormant until the October Crisis. The fact that it remained on the statute book did not render it permanent legislation.

27. The *GGPPA* backstop performs an analogous function. Canada can have no more certainty about our ability to overcome the collective action problem today than we had about our ability to defeat the Triple Alliance in 1915. But if and when the collective action problem is solved, the *GGPPA* will no longer produce any effects because no jurisdiction will be subject to the charges under Parts 1 and 2. If a province or territory chose to once again engage in free riding of the efforts of others, the *GGPPA* would be available to spring back into life, just as the *War Measures Act* was available to be invoked in response to aggression by the Axis powers.

28. Climate change, like all collective action problems, is a challenging problem to solve, and it will require time to achieve necessary structural changes. Despite honest, good faith efforts of all Canadian jurisdictions, the *Paris Agreement* targets might not be met, and further efforts may be required. But this does not mean the *GGPPA* is not, at its core and in substance, in both intent and effect, a temporary measure responding to a profound climate emergency.

E. NO PERMANENT STATES OF EMERGENCY

29. One objection to a flexible approach to the temporariness requirement under the emergency branch is that it risks inviting abuse and permitting permanent states of emergency. Absent hard cut-offs, there is a risk that ostensibly temporary laws would continue in force beyond what the emergency branch could otherwise justify.

30. There are two responses to this concern. The first is that traditional indicia of temporariness offer no greater protection against permanent emergencies. As Professor Hogg notes, “an ostensibly temporary measure can always be continued in force by Parliament”.²² Indeed, the issue in both *Fort Frances* and *Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians*

²¹ *War Measures Act, 1914*, 5 Geo V, c 2 (Can), s 5.

²² Peter Hogg, *Constitutional Law of Canada*, 5th ed (Toronto: Carswell, 2007) (looseleaf revision 2019-1), §17.4(e).

were laws enacted by Parliament that extended temporary war-time measures beyond the temporal limits that had originally attached to them.²³

31. The second response to the concern rests with the judiciary. There is a need for courts to play a meaningful role in ensuring that the exercise of emergency power by Parliament stays within constitutional bounds. One of the most significant insights into democratic responses to contemporary emergencies is that there is a need to create legal boundaries around the exercise of exceptional emergency power. While democratic states may need to resort to emergency power to respond to existential threats, they must do so in ways that remain regulated by law.²⁴

32. The contemporary practice of democracies dealing with emergencies demonstrates that there is a critical role for the courts to play in ensuring that such powers are not abused. Even in the war on terror, in which several democratic states have resorted to exceptional legislation, national courts have demonstrated a willingness to scrutinize claims that states of emergency exist. In *Hamdi* the US Supreme Court upheld the exceptional authority of the President to detain ‘enemy combatants’ without charge under the post-9/11 *Authorization for the Use of Military Force*. However, the Court also cautioned the government that it would remain vigilant, and that if factual circumstances in Afghanistan changed, such exceptional power “may unravel”.²⁵

33. In *A & Others*, another war on terror case, the House of Lords rejected the Attorney General’s claim that it was for Parliament and the Secretary of State alone to decide if an emergency existed, reaffirming the Court’s important review function.²⁶ Lord Hoffmann went further and in fact found that the claimed post-9/11 emergency did not in fact exist such that the United Kingdom could enact an emergency derogation from its obligations under the ECHR.²⁷

34. The precise contours of the Court’s role in assessing existence of an emergency, or whether such an emergency has ended, remains unresolved by the *Anti-Inflation Reference*. But

²³ See *An Act to Provide for the completion after the declaration of peace of work begun and the final determination of matters pending before the Commissioner and Controller of Paper and the Paper Control Tribunal, or either of them, at the date of such declaration*, 9-10 Geo V, c 63 (Can) (World War I); *National Emergency Transitional Powers Act, 1945*, 9-10 Geo V, c 25 (Can) (World War II).

²⁴ Ferejohn & Pasquino, *supra* note 6 at 228-229.

²⁵ *Hamdi v Rumsfeld*, 542 US 507 at 521 (2004) (*per* O’Connor plurality opinion).

²⁶ *A & Others v Secretary of State for the Home Department; X & Another v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, [2004] UHKL 56 at paras 25-29 (*per* Lord Bingham).

²⁷ *Ibid* at paras 95-97 (*per* Lord Hoffmann).

that judicial role must be sufficiently meaningful and robust as to ensure that the architecture of the constitution remains respected.²⁸ In this respect, when the European Court of Human Rights reviews member states' claims of states of emergency under Art 15 of the ECHR, it applies a varying level of scrutiny that is sensitive to, *inter alia* the duration of the alleged state of emergency.²⁹ Canadian courts must also be sensitive to such considerations.

35. In the context of the *GGPPA*, at a minimum courts have the jurisdiction not only to ensure that there is sufficient evidence of a climate emergency, but also to review decisions of the Governor in Council respecting which jurisdictions are contained in the Schedule to the Act.³⁰ Beyond this, as the *WWI* and *II* cases make clear, there would also be some role for the Court to review whether a climate crisis continued to exist. However, because no party takes issue with the facts underlying the current climate emergency, the specific contours of this form of judicial review need not be addressed here.

PARTS IV & V – SUBMISSIONS RESPECTING COSTS & ORDER SOUGHT

36. Pursuant to the order granting it leave to intervene, the CLC does not seek costs and asks that no costs be ordered against it. The CLC requests that this Court dismiss these appeals.

ALL OF WHICH IS RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

DONE at Ottawa, this 27th day of January, 2020.



Simon Archer
Mariam Moktar
Daniel Sheppard

**Counsel for the Intervener,
The Canadian Labour Congress**

²⁸ Belobaba, *supra* note 7 at 416-417.

²⁹ *Brannigan and McBride v The United Kingdom*, Eur Ct HR (Plen), Apps No 14553/89 & 14554/89 (25 May 1993) at para 43.

³⁰ Refusals to take action by the Federal Executive are amenable to judicial review: See e.g. *Canada (Prime Minister) v Khadr*, [2010] 1 SCR 44 (judicial review of Prime Minister's refusal to request repatriation from foreign detention); *Canada (Attorney General) v PHS Community Services Society*, [2011] 3 SCR 134 (judicial review of failure of Minister to issue a statutory exemption).

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