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MEDIA RELEASE

SFU researchers chart a path to decarbonizing Canadian transport in new report

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A new report from researcher Tiffany Vass and professor Mark Jaccard in Simon Fraser University's School of Resource and Environmental Management challenges several assumptions about decarbonizing Canadian transport.

The report *Driving Decarbonization: Pathways and Policies for Canadian Transport* focuses on both **actions** – energy efficiency, fuel switching, urban redesign, and lifestyle changes to reduce transport emissions – and **policies** – the mechanisms governments use to motivate these actions by individuals, institutions and corporations.

One key message from the 50-page report is that a rapid reduction in the consumption of gasoline and diesel can happen now, in contrast to the conventional narrative that transport decarbonization must await innovations in batteries, hydrogen storage, and "blendable" biofuels. Just as Brazil rapidly reduced gasoline use in the 1980s and Sweden is reducing gasoline and diesel use in buses and trucks today, Canada can quickly increase the consumption of 85% ethanol in dedicated flex-fuel vehicles and 100% biodiesel in modified trucks.

"Vehicles using electricity and maybe hydrogen will ultimately play a key role, as will reduced vehicle use with more transit and cycling." says co-author Mark Jaccard. "But with just a bit of political leadership, we could be using the existing distribution infrastructure of the petroleum industry to accelerate the adoption of flex-fuel vehicles using ethanol and trucks and other heavy vehicles using biodiesel, thus rapidly reducing our net carbon emissions in transport."

And what would that political leadership look like? "While some economists argue that we must wait until politicians set sufficiently high carbon taxes – a 30-year argument with little to show – our political leaders can instead mimic and even surpass activist jurisdictions like California with highly flexible fuel regulations." says Jaccard. "As the report shows, a low carbon fuel standard can dramatically reduce the life-cycle carbon intensity of energy used in transport over the coming decades, with an economic efficiency performance close to that of carbon taxes."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Jaccard and his research associates have been producing climate policy analyses for 30 years for governments and interest groups at the international, federal, provincial and municipal levels. Jaccard has served as a climate policy expert on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Global Energy Assessment, the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, Canada's National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, and the BC Climate Action Team. Vass was recently the winner of the Dean's Convocation Model in SFU's Faculty of Environment.

CONTACT:
Mark Jaccard, School of Resource and Environmental Management, 778.789.0852, jaccard@sfu.ca

Ian Bryce, University Communications, 604.773.8134, ian_bryce@sfu.ca

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