

# An Introduction to the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS)

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# British Columbia Background

## 2007: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act

- 33% decrease from 2007 levels by 2020
- 80% decrease from 2007 levels by 2050

## 2008: Carbon Tax Act

- North America's first legislated carbon tax
  - 2009, \$15 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e emitted => \$30 per tonne in 2012
  - revenue neutral

## 2008: Climate Action Plan

- comprehensive plan for GHG abatement

## 2008: PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

- CAN\$94 million endowment
- largest single university endowment in Canadian history

# What is PICS?

4-university consortium:



Emphasis on “S” in PICS = SOLUTIONS

## Mission:

*To partner with governments, the private sector, civil society, and other researchers to undertake research on, monitor and assess the potential impacts of climate change, and to assess, develop and promote viable mitigation and adaptation options to better inform climate change policies and actions.*



# PICS is . . .

## a 'new' model

- an endowed (thus independent), credible, responsive, applied-research think tank that draws directly from talent pool in BC universities (and elsewhere)

## fund research but not a granting agency

- a policy-oriented, directed- and applied-research consortium

## focused on BC

- BC-relevant but not BC-myopic

## close collaborator with BC government

- especially Climate Action Secretariat

## highly multidisciplinary

- natural sciences, engineering, architecture, planning, social sciences, humanities, arts

## vigorous in emphasis on communication with non-academics

- knowledge translation & transmission for action



# PICS Activities -- research

## Strategic research plan

- 4 umbrella research themes
  - resilient ecosystems
  - low carbon-emissions economy
  - sustainable communities
  - social mobilization
- For each theme, workshop held to identify research priorities; used to frame call for research applications to PICS
- March 2010, concluded each of 4 workshops

## Fellowships (as of April 2010)

- 36 graduate fellowships
- 6 post-doctoral fellows

## co-op student program

- 12 work terms/year



# PICS Activities -- dissemination

## Annual Forums

- 2009: Decoding Carbon Pricing: Achieving a Low Carbon Society in BC
- 2010: FutureGrid: BC's Energy Options in a Changing Environment

## White Papers series

- 9 published to date; 3 more commissioned
- eg, electrifying the BC vehicle fleet;  
C sequestration in BC forests

## weekly “PICS News Scan”

- widely e-distributed
- news made policy & action & BC relevant

## short courses, lectures

- multiple public lectures across BC
- seminar series, webcast
- invited guest lectures from noted scholars



# PICS Activities -- action

## community climate action workshops

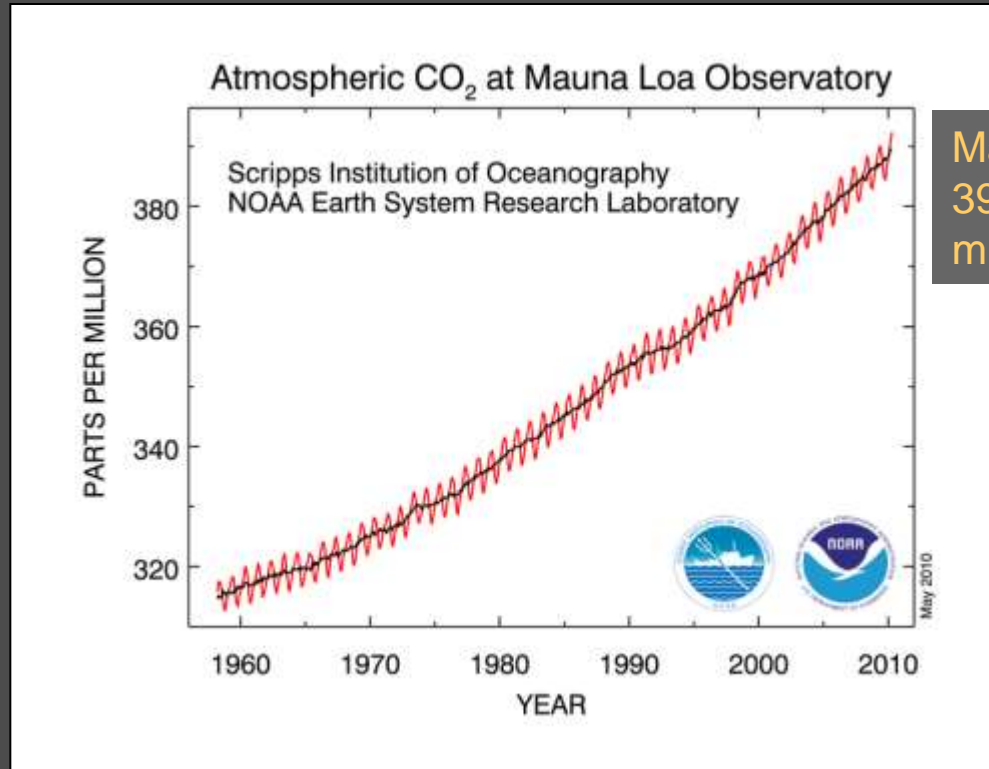
- “Small Steps, Big Leaps: Climate Action Mobilization”
- 2-day workshops exploring community-based climate change mitigation strategies
- open to local governments, public sector organizations, businesses, NGOs, First Nations, students





# PICS

an agent of large-scale social & cultural transformation  
(our collective task is indeed urgent)



May 2010: 392 ppmv  
39% higher than in  
mid-1800s

[www.pics.uvic.ca](http://www.pics.uvic.ca)