

Federal Debates Commission threatens to Bigfoot National Grassroots Debates Initiative 100debates.ca

*Commission's proposed date is same day as confirmed
environmental debates in over 100 ridings nation-wide*

Toronto, August 1, 2019 -- Today, GreenPAC and Équiterre expressed deep disappointment following the Leaders' Debates Commission's announcement that the national English-language debate is planned for Monday October 7, 2019, the same day more than 100 local debates on the environment are slated to take place. (Complete list of debates here www.100debates.ca/debates).

"This is the most important election we've ever had on the environment. Community volunteers across Canada have responded by pulling together the largest number of themed all-candidates debates in Canadian history," said **GreenPAC's Executive Director, Sabrina Bowman**. "The Commission's proposal would severely undermine the hard work being done in these communities."

"Whole communities are literally underwater and wildfires are ravaging our forests, youth are walking the streets to urge Government for climate action, it's important for voters to know what the leaders as well as their local candidates have to suggest as solutions to address environmental issues," said **Ryan Worms, Communications Director at Équiterre**.

Over 40 concerned debate organizers signed a joint letter to the Commissioner yesterday urging the Commission to select an alternate date for the leaders' debate. The letter highlighted the [Commission's mandate](#), which states that it must not "preclude other organizations from producing or organizing leaders' debates or other political debates."

With environment [polling as the top concern](#) in the upcoming election, 100 Debates on the Environment publicly launched on June 5, 2019, identifying October 7 as the nation-wide date for all debates. The announcement was covered in a number of major media outlets, including [CBC Radio's The House](#), [The Hill Times](#), and several community outlets. The initiative later urged the Commission by mail to refrain from booking the leaders' debates on the same day. A July 23 meeting with the Commissioner's office failed to offer up any meaningful resolution.

With the Commission's announcement, debate hosts must figure out whether to proceed with their plans, or try to find another date that works for them and their community. This is a significant amount of work for volunteers who have already made a serious commitment to this democratic endeavour. In some cases, debate hosts will simply be unable to find an alternative and the debate will not take place. Keeping the scheduled date would force Canadians to

choose between hearing from their local officials and national party leaders. As such, 100 Debates on the Environment is now considering alternative dates.

“We have been planning debates in 5 ridings in our region, investing at least 30 hours a week on this for the past 2 months. Working with the local chambers of commerce and other community organizations, we've negotiated free space, secured venues and partners and confirmed the participation of nearly all candidates,” said **Cindy Toth, Vice-Chair of the Halton Environmental Network’s Board of Directors**.

“The Commission has created a real logistical challenge for grassroots community organizers in every province and territory who, like me, had started to book venues, invite candidates and publicize their event,” said **Kirk Grayson, an organizer from British Columbia**.

-30-

ABOUT 100 DEBATES ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

100 Debates on the Environment is a project coordinated by GreenPAC. Visit www.100debates.ca for more information on the project and for a list of local debates.

RIDINGS WITH CONFIRMED DEBATE ORGANIZERS

Alberta

Banff—Airdie
Calgary Centre
Calgary Confederation
Calgary Heritage
Edmonton Strathcona

BC

Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam
Cowichan—Malahat—Langford
Delta
Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke
Kelowna—Lake Country
Kootenay Columbia
North Okanagan—Shuswap
Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge
Richmond Centre
South Okanagan—West Kootenay
Vancouver East
Vancouver Granville
Victoria
West Vancouver—Sunshine
Coast—Sea to Sky Country

Manitoba

Elmwood—Transcona
Winnipeg South
Winnipeg South Centre

New Brunswick

Ontario

Ajax
Barrie—Innisfil
Bay of Quinte
Beaches—East York
Burlington
Davenport
Don Valley West
Dufferin—Caledon
Eglinton—Lawrence
Elgin—Middlesex—London
Etobicoke—Lakeshore
Flamborough-Glanbrook
Guelph
Kanata—Carleton
Kingston and the islands
Kitchener Centre
Kitchener—Conestoga
Kitchener South-Hespeler
Leeds—Grenville—
Thousands Islands and
Rideau Lakes
London—Fanshawe
London North Centre
London West
Milton
Newmarket—Aurora

Simcoe North
Sudbury
Thunder Bay—Superior North
Toronto Centre
Toronto—Danforth
Toronto—St. Paul's
University—Rosedale
Waterloo
Wellington—Halton Hills
Windsor West
York Centre

PEI

Charlottetown

Quebec

Abitibi—Témiscamingue
Ahuntsic-Cartierville
Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel
Berthier—Maskinongé
Brome—Missisquoi
Hochelaga
Hull—Aylmer
Joliette
LaSalle—Émard—Verdun
Longueuil—Saint-Hubert
Louis-Hébert
Laval—Les Îles
Outremont

100 DEBATES on the ENVIRONMENT

Beauséjour
Fredericton
Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe
New Brunswick Southwest
Newfoundland and Labrador
Long Range Mountains
Northwest Territories
Northwest Territories
Nova Scotia
Cape Breton Canso
Cumberland Colchester
Halifax
Halifax West
Kings—Hants
Sydney—Victoria

Nipissing—Timiskaming
Northumberland—Peterborough South
Oakville
Oakville North—Burlington
Orleans
Ottawa Centre
Ottawa South
Ottawa Vanier
Ottawa West—Nepean
Parkdale—High Park
Peterborough—Kawartha
Pickering—Uxbridge
Richmond Hill
Sarnia—Lambton
Scarborough Guildwood

Pontiac
Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier
Québec
Saint-Maurice—Champlain
Shefford
Sherbrooke
Terrebonne
Trois-Rivières
Vaudreuil—Soulanges
Saskatchewan
Regina-Lewvan
Regina Qu'Appelle
Saskatoon—University
Yukon
Yukon

ABOUT GREENPAC:

Launched in 2015, GreenPAC is Canada's non-partisan non-profit organization that works to build environmental leadership in politics. GreenPAC's other initiatives include a political internship program on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, as well as a non-partisan endorsement program for aspiring political candidates with a demonstrated commitment to the environment. Visit www.greenpac.ca for more information.

For more information or interview requests including with local organizers, please contact: Kate Belmore, GreenPAC, 647-457-3075, k.belmore@greenpac.ca