Taking on the Climate Crisis together as a nation

Why Canada needs a National Emergency Briefing

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Contributor

CANADA — When I facilitate mindfulness meditation, I often remind people of the importance of being fully present with what is in front of us, even when it is uncomfortable. Right now, what is in front of us as a nation—and as a global community—is deeply unsettling. But to protect the future of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, we cannot afford to look away.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND US

Globally, climate change has shifted from a future warning to an undeniable, present-day reality. Total global emissions continue to rise, and we are witnessing unprecedented extremes—from historic heatwaves shattering records across Europe to the hottest ocean temperatures ever recorded, driving intense marine heatwaves worldwide. We are rapidly approaching critical temperature thresholds that put essential ecosystems and human lives at risk.

Here in Canada, the impacts are no longer abstract; they are directly at our doorsteps. The devastating realities of climate change are unfolding in real-time.

In Western Canada, a volatile wildfire season has already forced evacuations as over a hundred active blazes tear through dry forests, threatening vulnerable communities. At the same time, unpredictable extreme weather is shifting violently from one end of the spectrum to the other. Just days after facing suffocating heat warnings, the nation's capital was hit by a historic, record-breaking downpour on Canada Day, dumping over 100 mm of rain in hours, flooding thousands of basements, submerging major highways, and overwhelming city infrastructure. From toxic wildfire smoke blanketing our cities to flash floods placing systemic threats on our infrastructure and food supply, the Climate Crisis is no longer a headline about somewhere else—it is here.

Despite the severity of these events, our collective response is still geared toward a slow, gradual transition. The science is screaming that gradual change is no longer enough. We are in a planetary emergency.

THE UK INSPIRATION

Late last year, a group in the United Kingdom recognized this disconnect. In November 2025, they hosted a National Emergency Briefing in Westminster, England. The event brought together over 1,200 politicians, business leaders, media figures, and civil society organizers. Leading scientists and experts delivered an unvarnished, transparent look at the escalating risks posed to national security, health, and the economy. It was not an exercise in despair; it was about building a shared foundation of truth to launch a Second World War-scale response.

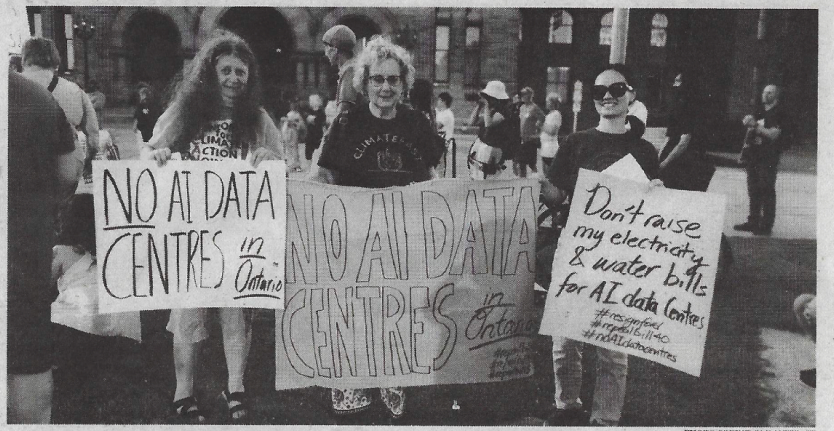


PHOTO CREDIT: CLIMATEFAST

ClimateFast members Lyn, co-founder of ClimateFast, Judith, and Anna gathered in protest the proliferation of artificial intelligence at Queens Park in Toronto on June 29, 2026.

WHY CANADA NEEDS THE CNEB

I am a volunteer with an environmental group called ClimateFast. We are currently organizing the Canadian National Emergency Briefing (CNEB) to bring this same vital intervention here. The goal is to gather the country's leading experts to formally brief our politicians, civic leaders, and the public.

"We are not just fighting against an emergency; we are fighting for a secure, just, and livable world."

Why is this so crucial? Because you cannot mobilize a country to treat a crisis like an emergency if you do not officially communicate it as one. Right now, climate action in Canada is too often slowed by partisan debates, regional divides, and dangerous misinformation. A nationally recognized

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briefing will cut through the noise. It will allow us to frame critical infrastructure, like a decentralized, pan-Canadian East-West renewable energy grid, not just as an environmental preference but as an urgent national security priority. We need our leaders to look at the exact same data at the exact same time so we can finally agree on the scale of the action required.

What is needed to make it happen?

Organizing an intervention of this magnitude is a massive undertaking. Currently, the CNEB is in the critical coalition-building phase. We have not set an official event date yet because our immediate focus is on partnering with the right organizations, recruiting world-class experts, and building an unbreakable alliance of cross-sector leaders.

To make the CNEB a reality, we need:

- **Strategic Partnerships:** We are actively seeking alliances with environmental networks, health organizations, business leaders, and civic institutions.
- **Public Pressure:** We need everyday Canadians to demand transparency. We must ask our MPs and local leaders to commit to attending and supporting a national briefing when it launches.
- **Community Mobilization:** We need platforms, venues, and media outlets to help amplify the call to action.

In the Japanese Canadian community, we deeply understand resilience. We know what it means to face systemic hardship, to rebuild, and to prioritize the well-being of future generations. Addressing the Climate Crisis requires that same spirit of community care and unwavering resolve.

We are not just fighting *against* an emergency; we are fighting for a secure, just, and livable world. If you are a community leader, an organizer, or simply a concerned citizen, we need your voice in this coalition. The time for gradual steps has passed. It is time for us to face this emergency together.

For a clear look at the tone and format we are aiming to replicate, you can watch the opening remarks from the UK National Emergency Briefing (http://bit.ly/3SO6TIY), which outlines the systemic challenges and the need for immediate cross-sector action.

The evacuations, the flooded highways and basements, and the record heatwaves are no longer just warnings—they are a mandate for immediate, unyielding action. We must hold our governments and corporations strictly accountable to aggressive emissions-reduction targets. It is time to treat this emergency like the crisis it is. Advocate, vote, and support organizations on the frontlines of the climate battle. The window to act is rapidly closing, and apathy is a luxury we no longer can afford.

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For more information about the Canadian National Emergency Briefing, please visit our website at www.nebriefing.ca.

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sentative of Vancouver Centre, could forward was the unassimilation of Oriental residents in the province. I would like to know if there is greater degree of assimilation of the Japanese race than to fight for their adopted country, fully realizing the object of the war as those 150 [sic] soldier boys."

"Now, Dear Editor, is it wrong to say that your politician's claim of Japanese could never assimilate with Canadians is a damnable lie to present to the people three thousand miles away? I say this because he has prevented us from this great assimilation work of fighting shoulder to shoulder with Canadian brothers for the common cause and obstructed to get more soldiers in British Columbia accordingly."

Sadly, Murakami would only live to be eligible once to cast a ballot in the 1935 election as he died in 1939 at age 57. Fortuitously, he was spared the betrayal of forced uprooting, internment, dispossession and even exile to Japan in 1942. Not so fortunate were 50 war veterans, members of the Canadian Legion Branch No. 9, who were sent to internment camps and one prisoner of war camp in Ontario.

Hirokichi Isomura was the only Japanese Canadian veteran sent to a POW camp, because he protested. He was a Great War veteran in the service of King and country, yet the government of Canada saw no difference.

"Did they serve at the front lines?" This is the question I'm often asked when I tell people about Japanese Canadians serving in the First World War. Their doubtful query insinuates that surely the Canadian government would not intern someone who risked life and limb for freedom and democracy.

Indeed, they did serve at the front, in the line of fire, in the trenches with bayonets and clubs, they faced snipers' bullets—two came home minus an eye, many more came home with shrapnel in their bodies.

"Indeed, they did serve at the front, in the line of fire, in the trenches with bayonets and clubs, they faced snipers' bullets."

All but 10 did not receive permission to wear the "Gold Stripe" for being wounded. It is incredible then, how the injustice could have happened, especially when these veterans belonged to the Canadian Legion, had lobbied and won the right to vote in 1931, and had lived in Canada for 40 years.

Archival records give hints to the pride these men had in their military service for Canada. One returned soldier's fishing boat was named "Veteran." Pte. Otoji Kamachi's industry-standard strawberry was named the "British Sovereign Berry," and every funeral photo that I have found of a veteran had his coffin draped with the Union Jack and the front row lined with comrades from Legion No. 9, recognizable even at a distance with the circular lapel pin they had the privilege of wearing, the **Canadian Army Class A War Service Badge**.

With Legion Branch No. 9's charter being reinstated as we speak, we are in a unique predicament. I am appealing to all readers and supporters to help us rebuild; it has been 81 years in the making. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion in Canada. As such, joining any branch in Canada in 2026 as a new member means that membership fees are waived. Please email jclegion9@gmail.com if you would like to join. You do not need to be a veteran, related to one, or be Japanese Canadian. Meetings will be held via Zoom. Since the $60 annual membership fee is waived, a donation would be greatly appreciated so that we get underway. We would like to send all new members the Legion Centenary Medal ($30 value). This year is also the 110th anniversary of the enlistment of Japanese Canadians in the First World War, via Alberta in 1916.

Together, let's remember and restore the traditions and pride that Legion No. 9 once held, and invest now in its legacy for future generations to know and preserve. Stay tuned for an official announcement in the next issue! Lest we forget.

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