



School of  
Public Policy

# ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

BUILDING PATHWAYS TO A SECURE, PROSPEROUS  
AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

“This is a critical moment for Canadian energy and natural resources. We face geopolitical uncertainty and fierce global competition but also unparalleled opportunities for prosperity, innovation and stronger international partnerships.”

— DR. ROBERT (RJ) JOHNSTON

**T**he energy and natural resources sectors have long been drivers of economic prosperity and growth in Canada, but their future is clouded by uncertainties from tariffs to geopolitics to climate risks to global competition for capital. Past stability and deep integration into the U.S. energy and mineral markets can no longer be taken for granted.

Canada needs policies that help create a national consensus on energy and natural resources, working with federal and provincial governments, First Nations, industry, investors and civil society. We bring a transdisciplinary, global and solutions-oriented agenda to Canada's energy and natural resources risks and opportunities. We work to build policy options oriented towards growth, resilience and inclusivity.

We seek opportunities to co-create better public policy by engaging industry, government, think-tanks and academic partners in Canada and around the world.

**DR. ROBERT (RJ) JOHNSTON**  
Director, Energy and Natural  
Resources Policy

A recognized leader in global energy and natural resources policy, geopolitics and corporate strategy, Dr. Johnston joined the School of Public Policy in 2025. He was previously senior director of research at the Center on Global Energy Policy at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. He was the founding director of the Eurasia Group's Energy, Climate and Resources practice and served as the firm's CEO from 2013 to 2018.

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# OUR CORE FOCUS

1

## **BUILDING BRIDGES TO ASIA FOR CANADA'S OIL, GAS AND LOW-CARBON FUELS**

Canada is expanding energy links to the Asia-Pacific with major Pacific Coast export infrastructure. However, growth remains uncertain given global competition, evolving demand patterns, lack of consensus on the environmental/climate impact of increased exports and geopolitical complexity in Canada's bilateral relations with energy importers, including China and India. We focus on understanding these global trends and developing optimal policy paths for Canada to account for risk and opportunity.

2

## **ADAPTING TO THE NEW REALITIES OF CANADA-U.S ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES POLITICS**

Canada-U.S. relations have been severely impacted by Washington's shift toward protectionism, hard power and nationalism. It has disrupted trade in critical materials including aluminum, steel and copper. The oil, gas and electricity trade is so far mostly unaffected. We focus on how the turmoil could rupture a long-standing, mutually beneficial energy and minerals relationship, or provide an opportunity for deeper engagement in a new North American trade and security framework.

3

## **SUPPORTING CANADA AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN CRITICAL MINERALS**

Canada faces the challenge of turning critical minerals potential into a driver of economic growth, national security and deeper ties with allies and key trading partners. Policy challenges include streamlining project assessment and permitting, developing financial incentives and establishing public-private partnerships to attract capital and grow production. We benchmark Canada versus competitors and we analyze the relationship between critical minerals and industry, trade, security innovation policy and support opportunities to increase Indigenous participation in the sector.

4

## **AGE OF ELECTRIFICATION – POWERING CANADA'S INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS**

Low cost, clean electricity has long been an advantage for manufacturers in Canada. Maintaining clean and affordable electricity is more important than ever, as our manufacturing sector is under pressure from tariffs and global competition, and a national strategy for electricity is vital. We focus on policy to address aging generation and transmission infrastructure, while developing policy to support and grow legacy industries while attracting new electricity-intensive industries like data centres. We explore how these competitiveness challenges must co-exist with Canada's transition to a lower carbon grid, requiring complementary policy and technology solutions to decarbonize fossil generation and scale nuclear power and renewables.



**ABOUT THE  
SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC POLICY**

Under Director Martha Hall Findlay, the James S. and Barbara A. Palmer Chair in Public Policy, the School leverages the responsiveness of a respected think-tank and the academic rigour of one of Canada's

leading research universities. Our focus is in five areas – Economic and Fiscal Policy, Energy and Natural Resources Policy, International Policy, Health and Social Policy and Canadian Governance Policy.