Later is Too Late

A Participatory Climate Documentary by Nancy Nicol and Seniors for Climate

Later is Too Late is a window into the fears and hopes of ordinary people across Canada facing the existential threat of the climate crisis and working to be part of the solutions. “It really scares me for my grandchildren,” and “we are motivated by our love of our grandchildren,” say participants. The film documents the first ever National Seniors Day climate action, organized by Seniors for Climate, on Oct. 1, 2024. Seniors, youth, Indigenous elders, environmental and climate justice activists across Turtle Island rallied in 76 communities from Pugwash NS to Victoria BC to Yellowknife NT.

Participants express their anger at years of inaction in cutting fossil fuel emissions. “We’ve known for 20 years!” says 88-year-old environmentalist David Suzuki. A youth in Toronto asks, “When will the Canadian government have the political will to put my future ahead of their economic gain?”

Traversing the country, the documentary probes into layered and multifaceted climate issues highlighted by communities in different regions. In Pugwash NS, a poet delivers a devastating eulogy to the loss of biodiversity. In front of the New Brunswick legislature, speakers address the importance of the moratorium on fracking. In southern Ontario, an emergency room doctor speaks to the threat of extreme heat to lives and health.

In Toronto, an Indigenous leader cautions listeners in a packed hushed auditorium that mining critical minerals for the “new green transition” in the Ring of Fire’ peat lands of Northern Ontario violates Indigenous sovereignty and causes environmental devastation. In Winnipeg, a farmer raises his voice on the loss of biodiversity and its impact on farming and food security. In Calgary, a doctor who was at the forefront of the successful fight to get coal off the electricity grid in Alberta speaks of that victory, just months before the government lifted the moratorium to allow coal mining to resume in December 2024. In Victoria, speakers from Dogwood BC, STAND.earth and the Sierra Club of British Columbia address the environmental impacts and the human costs to indigenous communities of the massive expansion of LNG (liquified natural gas) facilities and pipeline construction in British Columbia.

In a moving scene in Jasper, a senior whose home was destroyed in the summer of 2024 wildfires returns to the burned-out shell and plays a lament on her fiddle to assuage her grief. The moment transcends personal tragedy to speak to collective loss, while at the same time it is a remarkable moment of resilience in the face of climate devastation.

Later is Too Late is ultimately about hope. “We want to be the last generation hooked on fossil fuels,” one participant says. The power of seniors to affect change is invoked by multiple speakers: “We have a history of fighting for positive change and we’re not slowing down” … “What we’re doing today is all about the planet and it’s to get all grandparents across Canada, I think there’s 10 million of us, we want you all in the same movement together.” At the end of the film, Suzuki sums it up: “We’ve got to work together and transform our impact on the world we live in.”

Director Nancy Nicol (professor emerita, York University) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker with a long history of works on human rights and social justice. *Later is Too Late* is a participatory climate documentary co-produced by Nancy Nicol and Seniors for Climate. Seniors for Climate organizers and videographers in communities across Canada shared documentation of their events with Nancy, from which she created, ***Later is Too Late*****,** a powerful documentary that tells a story of climate activism and hope for a better future.