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## Review of *Hard Choices: Climate Change in Canada* Edited by Harold Coward and Andrew J. Weaver

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**Hard Choices: Climate Change in Canada.** Edited by Harold Coward and Andrew J. Weaver. Waterloo, Ontario: Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2004. viii + 273 pp. Figures, tables, maps, references, index. \$29.95 paper.

It's challenging to cover the complex issue of climate change in a 250-page book, let alone in a 500-word review.

*Hard Choices* does cover the ground quite well, reviewing climate science, impacts, adaptation, technology, policy, law, equity, and ethics.

Most of the contributions do justice to their topic, but there is some confusion as to the book's intended audience. A Canadian climate change specialist will not encounter much new material, although the volume will be of value to non-Canadian specialists who need an introduction to the Canadian context. Nonspecialists may be hampered by too many unexplained terms and references.

One of the most important chapters is Gerard McLean and Murray Love's examination of the technologies capable of achieving deep emission reductions. Their essay is clearly argued and thought-provoking, but its assertion that generation of electricity and especially hydrogen from nonfossil sources can be the only significant solution is not objective. The authors fail to pay sufficient attention to the potential for energy efficiency improvements and to the fact that powerful interests are now pursuing large-scale geological storage of CO<sub>2</sub> from fossil fuels. And while one can agree with the assertion that "climate change is a technological problem," a critical question not adequately addressed is the extent to which the problem is one of insufficient *deployment* of available technologies versus insufficient *development* of new ones. If the answer is, as a number of experts believe, "mostly the former," then dealing with climate change becomes primarily a problem of political will.

Cornelis van Kooten's chapter covers the main aspects of climate change economics, but his conclusion, that "economic models seem to favour adaptation over mitigation" (i.e., cutting emissions), shows why financial considerations alone are woefully inadequate for decision making. As Harold Coward emphasizes in his refreshing tour of ethical considerations, valuing nature for itself is a powerful reason to prioritize mitigation. Economics cannot determine decision making on climate change until it can appropriately value climate change impacts such as massive loss of biodiversity.

Andrew Weaver's chapter on climate change science includes a valuable history going back to Fourier's 1824 paper on the greenhouse effect, but it is disappointing to see very little discussion of what science is now telling us about the urgency of deep emission reductions. Steve Lonergan provides a useful discussion of equity considerations, fundamental to addressing climate change. James Bruce, Stewart Cohen, and co-authors offer useful short overviews of climate change impacts and adaptation in Canada, although their contributions miss an opportunity to address the associated financial costs.

The age of most of the essays is a significant deficiency given the rapid evolution of the issue. For instance, James Bruce and Doug Russell's admirable short chronology of international and domestic climate change policy ends in mid-2002; Canada has had two new federal climate change plans since then. Gordon Smith and David Victor's excellent article "Beyond Kyoto," however, which includes a persuasive argument for an international cap on the price of emission credits, is now very timely as post-Kyoto negotiations begin. **Matthew Bramley**, *Pembina Institute, Gatineau, Quebec*.