



SENATE
SÉNAT
CANADA

Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human, and Social Health

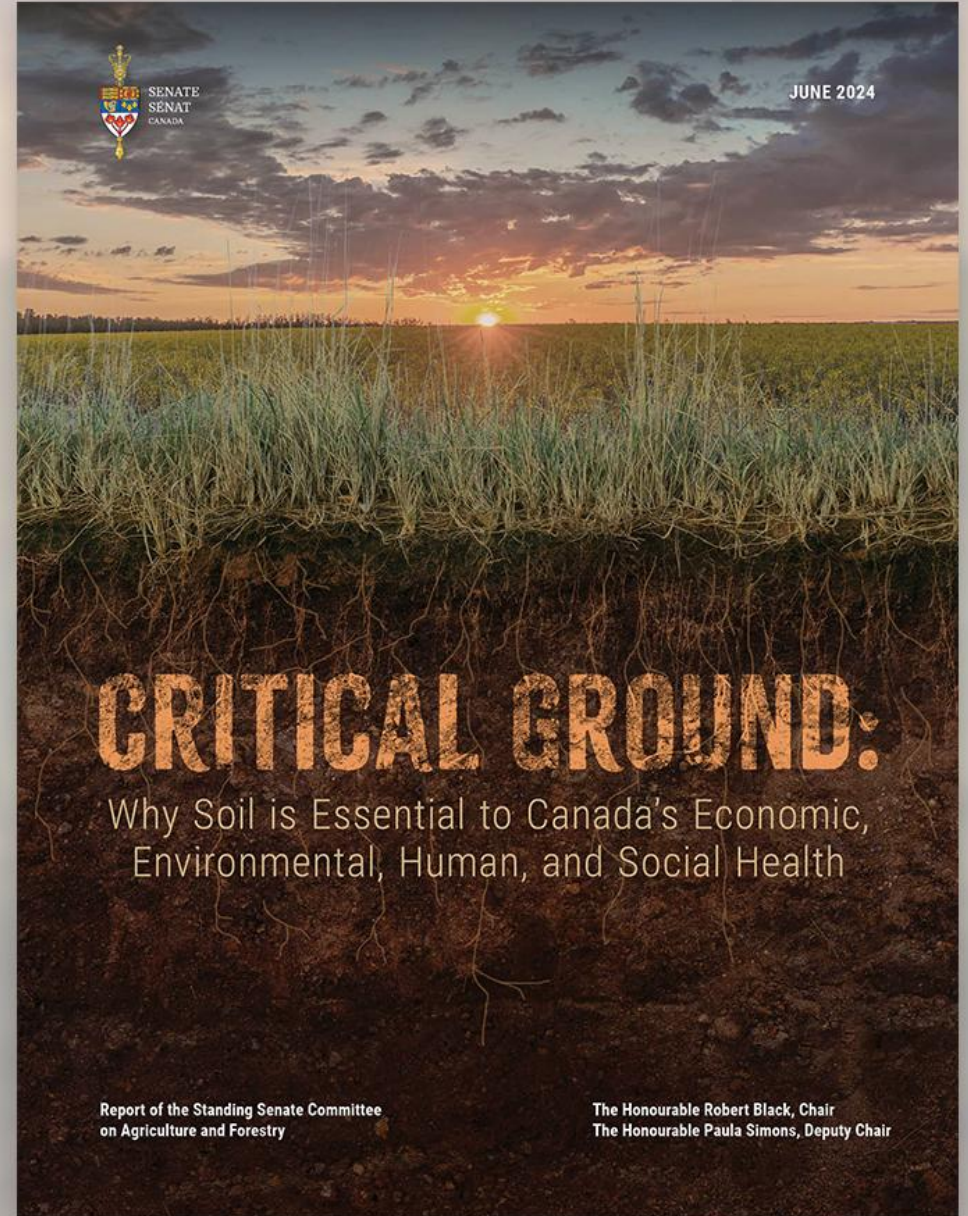
July 5, 2026



READ THE REPORT

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**STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**



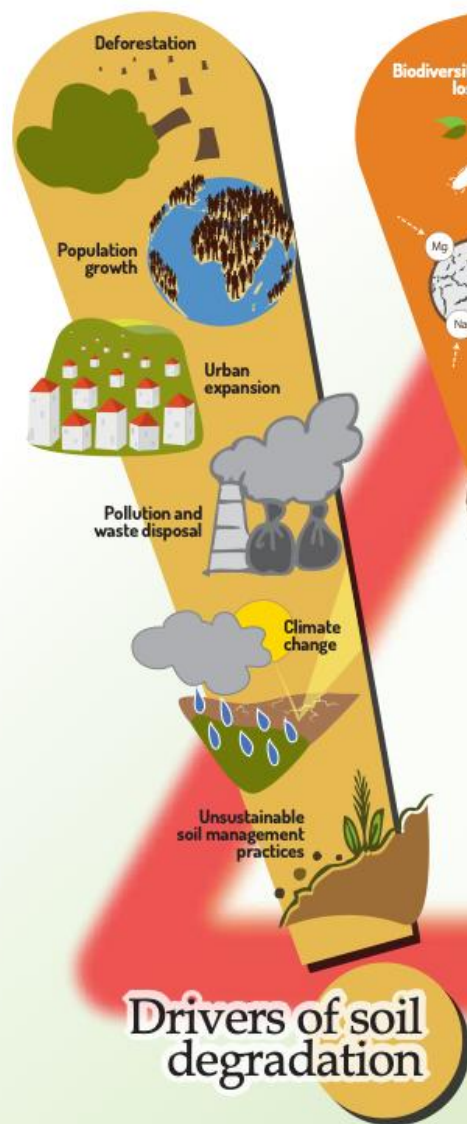
Report overview

- 153 witnesses
- 74 briefs and other documents
- Visits to sites across Canada and abroad
- Soil conditions across Canada and threats
- Improving and protecting soils through soil management practices
- Barriers to entry, financing, accessing programs, soils data collection and technology
- 25 recommendations

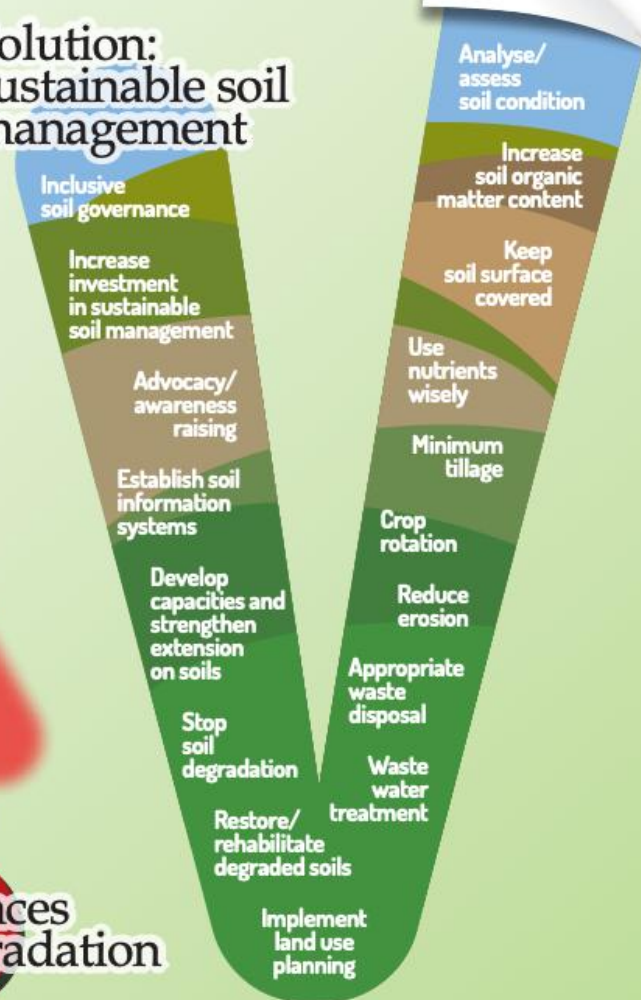


our Soils under threat

2015
International
Year of Soils
fao.org/soils-2015
#IYS2015



Solution: sustainable soil management



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

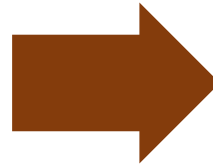


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Land Development
Department of Thailand

Soil management practices

Regenerative soil methods

- No- or low-till farming
- Crop cover
- Diversifying crops
- Agroforestry
- Grazing management



Benefits

- Cleaner air and water
- Climate change mitigation
- Enhanced biodiversity
- Food security

Supporting soil science and technology

- Integrated precision and “smart” ag tools
- Digital tracking
- Soil sensors



Recommendations

To Better Understand the State of Soil Health and Its Evolution, the Committee Recommends That:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Government of Canada designate soil as a strategic national asset.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Government of Canada appoint a national soils advocate.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Government of Canada support the development of a long-term overarching strategy to protect and conserve soil throughout Canada and that this strategy include targets, timetables, and provisions for review.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to support the development of a consensus on how to measure, report, and verify soil health.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, territories, Indigenous governments, academia, and agricultural and forestry producers to create a national soils institute and database; that this data be shared with provinces, territories, Indigenous governments, academia, and agricultural and forestry producers; and, that this data be collected at different points in time to adequately measure change over time.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Government of Canada create a national permafrost assessment program.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Government of Canada encourage provinces, territories, and municipalities to develop measures—as a form of land use planning—that best preserve and protect agricultural land in their jurisdictions.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to create and deliver a crop insurance model that incentivizes the ecological goods and services carried out by farmers, growers, and ranchers.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Government of Canada help to facilitate and encourage the creation of viable and valuable carbon markets for farmers, ranchers, and growers.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada implement tax credits for farmers, ranchers, and growers who have adopted, or are adopting, innovation and technology that support soil health, and that the Government of Canada does not leave the early adopters behind.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to expand and deliver higher quality broadband internet access in rural areas to promote a wider adoption of precision agriculture techniques to enhance soil health.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Government of Canada enhance funding for public/private partnerships for research and development with respect to agricultural and forestry soils.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to provide long-term funding for:

- agricultural and forest soil mapping throughout the country, as well as for data aggregation;
- a national topsoil sampling program; and,
- flood mapping near agricultural lands.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to:

- extend the Living Laboratories Initiative to all parts of the agriculture sector;
- update the agri-environmental indicators annually; and,
- invest further in the AgriScience Program clusters.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Government of Canada reinstate the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Government of Canada enhance funding for peer-to-peer soil networks that extends to all provinces and territories.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to enhance long-term funding for soil extension services.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments to develop a national strategy for remediating contaminated soils throughout the country.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Government of Canada collaborate with provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments to conduct more research on soil pollution to examine its impacts on human health.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Government of Canada address policy gaps that fail to create opportunities for Indigenous communities that will be effective in supporting soil health.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Government of Canada collaborate with the provinces and territories to enhance long-term funding for soils programming at post-secondary institutions and that this funding be sustained.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Government of Canada provide financial support for and encourage the development of programming in elementary and high schools to enhance awareness and understanding of the environmental, social, and economic contributions that agriculture brings to our country.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the national soils advocate, and relevant interested parties should commit to holding an annual national summit on soil health, and that the issue of soil health be the subject of each agriculture minister's agenda, leading to an annual report on soil health for the country.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The federal, provincial, and territorial governments give special consideration to the economic viability of agricultural and forestry producers in the development and implementation of all its future policies and programs related to soil health to ensure that producers are able to invest in soil health.

RECOMMENDATION 25

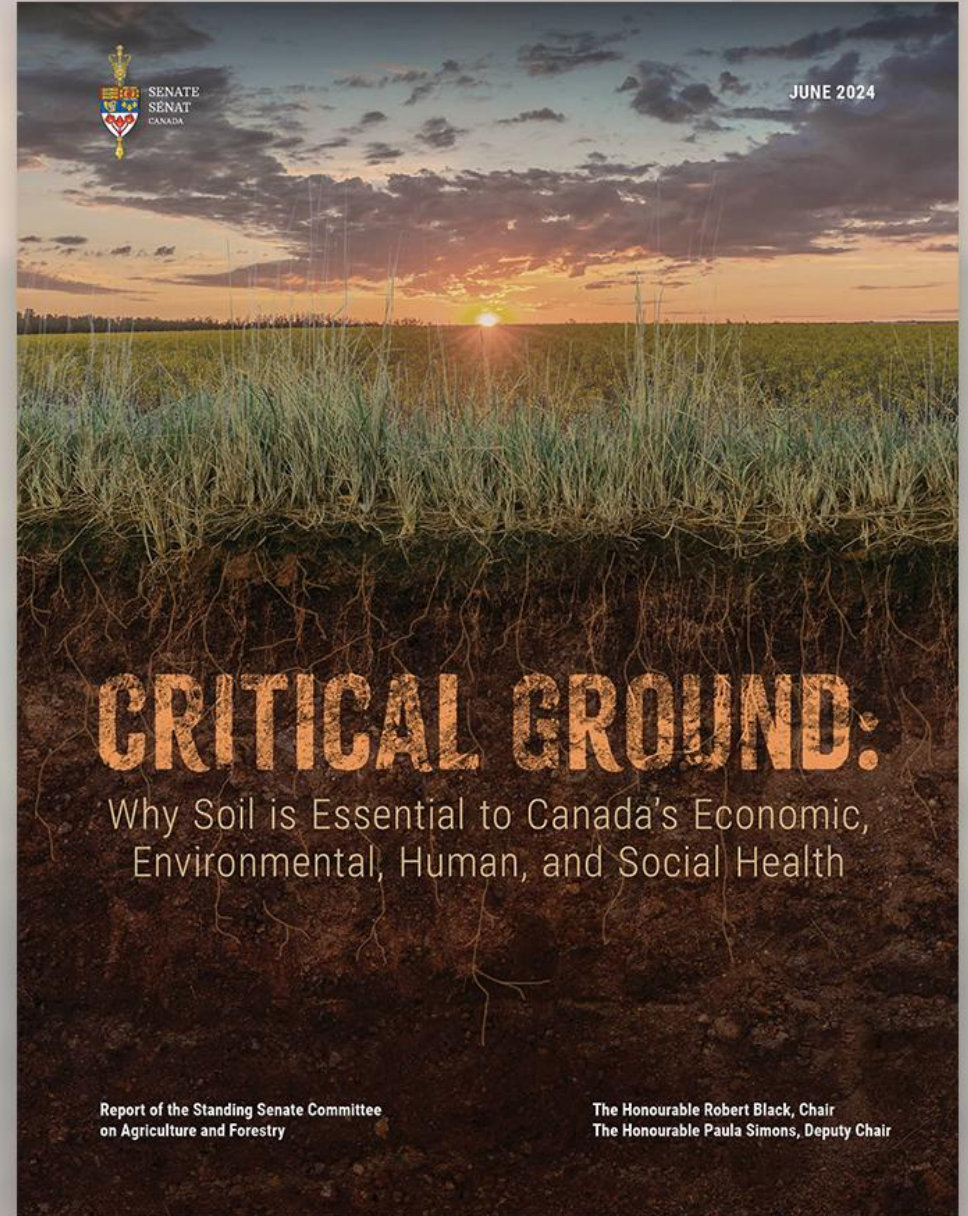
The Government of Canada recognize a sense of urgency and act accordingly. We do not have another 40 years to protect and conserve soil.



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**STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**



First Session, Forty-fifth Parliament,
3 Charles III, 2025

SENATE OF CANADA

BILL S-230

An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for soil health protection,
conservation and enhancement

FIRST READING, JUNE 10, 2025

National Agricultural Soil Strategy



Stay Connected



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**Thank you for the
opportunity!**