

Dr. Kristin Baetz's speech on Parliament for March for Science.

This is truly incredible to see so many people on parliament hill who support science.

How many of you are fans of Bill Nye the Science Guy? He is one of my heroes. He makes science cool and fun. So I know I am not alone here. Admit it How many of you have started binge watching Bill Nye's new show on Netflix - Bill Nye Saves the World? No, Bill Nye has not gained super-powers. But the point he is making is that Science has the power to save the world.

Whether it is the eminent threat of climate change, the next superbug, ensuring food security or restoring our beautiful parliament buildings. We need science to tackle these issues and future problems we cannot even imagine.

Canada can be an international leader in Science. We are a nation of creative and innovative people. Canada has world class universities and researchers. Through science Canada can not only improve the lives of our own citizens but make the world a better place.

But to do that, as a nation we need to prioritize our commitment to science. Over the last decade science and research in Canada has suffered. Labs across the country have shut down or downsized due to funding cuts. We have seen the muzzling of federal scientists. Not only do we lose the potential discoveries and advances from these research, but we are at risk of losing the next generation of researchers. Canada needs more scientists and critical-thinkers.

Last week the Naylor report on Fundamental Science was release. This report was commissioned by the Dr Duncan the Minister of Science and it outlines a truly outstanding vision for Canadian Research – a plan in which science is an integral part of Canada. Where curiosity driven research thrives. Where creativity and innovation flourishes. A plan which tackles head on issues of equity and diversity in research – a field in which women and minorities remain shockingly unrepresented. If the plan outlined in the Naylor Fundamental Science Review Report was implemented, it would not just restore research in Canada but revolutionize it.

But recommendations in a report are just that – recommendations. To see them implemented, to make science a national priority, requires that we make sure every Canadian, including our politicians, knows how critical science is for our quality of life and for the health of the planet.

And for that to occur we need you. All you scientists out there raise your hands. Not just the professors, graduate students and researchers at our esteemed federal institutions, but the science fair kids, the science teachers, the back-yard astronomers, the bird-counters, the makers and lego robotics warriors. Raise your hands. It is all our responsibility to tell the world what we are doing and why it is important. It is critical that we get the message out about how science touches everyone's life. We need to make Science a national priority.

Today we March for Science. But this cannot be a one-day event. Going forth, we need to get science out of the labs and fields and into the public agenda. Let's make Science Matter. Not because we want to, but because we have to.

As my hero Bill Nye says – "Science is the best idea humans ever had. The more people who embrace that idea, the better".