

Message from Sidney Ribaux

General Coordinator

“Équiterre’s 2008-2012 Strategic planning, adopted by the Board of Directors in March, confirms that we must focus our actions on two major areas: climate change and food. Concrete steps have already been taken in this direction.

Steven Guilbault is part of a select group of activists who have been following the evolution of one of these issues closely ever since the first United Nations’ Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, in 1995. His appointment as Deputy Executive Coordinator is testimony to the importance of this file for Équiterre as he explains in this report.

Food has been another key issue since Équiterre’s foundation. Many people are aware of our work because of the Community Supported Agriculture network and our campaigns promoting fair trade. Of course, Équiterre will continue to have a direct impact on community food choices. To achieve this, Équiterre, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, the Fédération des coopératives d’alimentation and the Union des producteurs agricoles founded the Food Sovereignty Coalition, which will promote buying local, ecological production and fair trade practices across Canada and internationally.

As for our own organization, the Board of Directors wanted to ensure that Équiterre would keep its loyal and gifted employees while attracting a new generation that includes both young talent and experienced professionals, and so our human resources policy has been revised to make it one of the best in our sector. Équiterre has also continued to be the driving force behind the Centre for Sustainable Development. The Centre will greatly improve the working conditions of Équiterre’s employees and volunteers while serving as a powerful educational tool.

The black cloud of economic crisis looms as 2009 begins. Équiterre, however, is still in an excellent position, especially financially, to implement its strategic plan. The diversification of Équiterre’s funding will, in fact, prove to be an asset in riding out the current recession.

In conclusion, I would like to tip my hat to the Board of Directors, which during the 2008 Annual General Meeting created the *Laure Waridel Bursary* to stimulate a sense of social entrepreneurship in students. It honours one of Équiterre’s co-founders, who launched the free trade campaign while still a student herself.”

