



## RBC Canadian Equity Income Fund

### Commentary as at December 31, 2023

Canadian equities rose in 2023 but underperformed most major markets given Canada's concentrated exposure to stocks in the Financials and Energy sectors and a relatively low number of high-flying technology companies. Most of the index gains came in the latter half of 2023 as investors grew more optimistic that two years of uncomfortably high inflation had been brought under control.

In this environment, speculation arose that the Bank of Canada (the "BOC") would begin to roll back interest rates in a bid to rejuvenate an economy weakened by soaring mortgage rates and high consumer-debt levels. Inflation, however, remained at 3.1% near year-end, above the 2% target, and the BOC's benchmark interest rate stood at 5%. Weaker growth, both domestic and global, led Canada's banks to increase their reserves for loan losses and kept energy prices in check.

The Fund's relative exposure to PulteGroup, Russel Metals, and First Quantum Minerals had the most positive impact on the Fund's returns, while exposure to Constellation Software, Fairfax Financial Holdings, and Alimentation Couche-Tard were negative for performance.

The sectors that had the most positive impact on the Fund's returns were Industrials, Energy, and Consumer Discretionary, while exposure to Utilities, Information Technology, and Financials had a negative impact.

The Fund had overweight positions in Agnico Eagles Mines, Nutrien, and Topaz Energy and underweight positions in Canadian National Railway, Alimentation Couche-Tard, and Constellation Software.

At the sector level, the Fund had overweight exposure to Real Estate, Energy, and Utilities and underweight exposure to Consumer Staples, Financials, and Industrials.

While a recession was avoided in 2023, the economy may slow over the next year, in the view of the portfolio manager, limiting equity gains in the near term. The portfolio manager believes, however, that economic growth and earnings should rebound at some point in 2024 as long as declines in interest rates and inflation are sustained.

This has been provided by RBC Global Asset Management Inc. (RBC GAM) and is for informational purposes, as of the date noted only. Discussion of any securities in this report is not a recommendation to buy or sell any specific security, and is subject to change. It is not intended to provide legal, accounting, tax, investment, financial or other advice and such information should not be relied upon for providing such advice. RBC GAM takes reasonable steps to provide up-to-date, accurate and reliable information, and believes the information to be so when provided. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Interest rates, market conditions, tax rulings and other investment factors are subject to rapid change which may materially impact analysis that is included in this document. You should consult with your advisor before taking any action based upon the information contained in this document. All opinions constitute our judgment as of the dates indicated, are subject to change without notice and are provided in good faith without legal responsibility. Information obtained from third parties is believed to be reliable but RBC GAM and its affiliates assume no responsibility for any errors or omissions or for any loss or damage suffered. RBC GAM reserves the right at any time and without notice to change, amend or cease publication of the information.

Please consult your advisor and read the prospectus or Fund Facts document before investing. There may be commissions, trailing commissions, management fees and expenses associated with mutual fund investments. Mutual funds are not guaranteed or covered by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation or by any other government deposit insurer. Mutual fund unit values change frequently. For money market funds, there can be no assurances that the fund will be able to maintain its net asset value per security at a constant amount or that the full amount of your investment in the fund will be returned to you. Past performance may not be repeated. RBC Funds, RBC Private Pools, RBC Alternative Funds and PH&N Funds are offered by RBC Global Asset Management Inc. (RBC GAM) and distributed through authorized dealers in Canada.

This document may contain forward-looking statements about a fund or general economic factors which are not guarantees of future performance. Forward-looking statements involve inherent risk and uncertainties, so it is possible that predictions, forecasts, projections and other forward-looking statements will not be achieved. We caution you not to place undue reliance on these statements as a number of important factors could cause actual events or results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forward-looking statement. All opinions in forward-looking statements are subject to change without notice and are provided in good faith but without legal responsibility.