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Nova Scotia Department of Energy
Energy Strategy/Climate Change Action Plan
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We thank the Government of Nova Scotia for the opportunity to present our concerns and ideas in the development of new approaches to sustainable energy for the Province.

On November 20, we attended the Digby public workshop on Energy Strategy hosted by Dr. Robert Fournier. There was lively discussion at that meeting and many ideas were introduced. However, we believe the baseline presented at the beginning of the session must be redrawn. Dr. Fournier described the necessity of economic growth with reduction in emissions without increasing the costs.

It will be very difficult to marry the concept of “growing the economy” with sustainable development of energy programmes as well as with other industries. We will soon find that it is impossible to have economic growth continue at the pace we have enjoyed and profited from for decades. We must think and work smaller, smarter, and locally. This base for future energy centres must be addressed in the preparation of new strategies.

In addition, what must be moved to a prominent position in the equation are the effects on the health of the citizens of both the Province and of Canada and, indeed, of the world. As has been demonstrated, without an environment of clean air, clean water and healthy food, it is ridiculous to expect a healthy population and a responsible citizenry for the future.

“Growing the economy” hasn’t worked. It has brought us to the crossroad of reality. It is now time to face this reality and to set course for a far more intelligent approach to the practice of sustainability. Of course, we will have to pay more for future energy. At the very least, go to Europe to find out just how privileged we have been in the use and abuse of our resources.

Any new energy policy must underline the principle of “Nova Scotia First”. It is long overdue that Nova Scotia take charge of its energy needs and of the new strategies to meet these needs.

We have the following specific suggestions in response to the questions posed in the Consultation Paper. We will refer to the relevant topics in each one of our suggestions.

1. Renewable Resources. Nuclear-power generated electricity is not mentioned in the Consultation Paper. We understand that there is a moratorium on nuclear power in Nova Scotia. The background rationale for excluding nuclear power plants needs to be identified. In addition, the potential cost/benefit option for importing nuclear power from other provinces needs to be addressed.
2. Air Quality and Energy Conservation & Efficiency. Financial incentives need to be stated for homeowners who will use solar energy to heat their homes or to generate electricity for direct and locally managed use. Local management could also apply to wind farms.
3. Electricity and Government Action. Given the use of (imported) coal for generating 74% of the energy in 2013 (see figure on p.7 of the Consultation Paper), it would be relevant to mention the amount (tonnes) of the resulting GHG emissions. Research needs to be done on the cost of separating carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide in case the coal from underground mines in Nova Scotia is used instead of the imported coal. The potential option of storing the GHG and sulphur dioxide in the mined underground space could be included as an essential part of the research. The results of the research can be expressed in terms of the comparison of the costs of using the imported and locally mined coal.

After reading Bill No. 146, “Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act”, we are greatly encouraged by the intention of the Government to address the issues outlined in the Department of Energy’s Consultation Paper.

Very sincerely,

Ashraf and Carol Mahtab

Copies to: The Liberal Party of Nova Scotia by e-mail
The NDP of Nova Scotia by e-mail