

**December 11, 2007**

**Submission to the panel examining Nova Scotia's energy strategy and climate change policy**

Thank you to the panel for allowing me to comment on the Government's energy and climate change plans. I will try to be as brief and specific as possible.

**THE CRISIS**

As the most recent IPCC report makes abundantly clear, we are in an unprecedented climate crisis. Given the frightening pace of global warming and the impending shortage of fossil fuels, it is becoming increasingly clear that major changes must be made as soon as possible to avert a climate catastrophe. Business as usual is not an option.

The most recent report of the International Energy Agency states that demand for fossil fuels will soon outstrip supply as India and China continue to grow and develop. As this demand grows, Nova Scotia risks being without a secure supply of fossil fuels as Canada is the only member of the IEA without legislation or regulation to ensure a 90-day supply of oil, as specified by the International Energy Program's oil stockholding requirements.

In addition, NSPI currently buys 'blood coal' from Colombia—comprising approximately 17% of its annual supply. The human rights abuses committed there as a direct result of coal mining mean we are complicit when we buy this coal. It is also unreliable. Please refer to a recent book edited by Aviva Chomsky called *The People Behind Colombian Coal*.

**ENERGY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. NS should work with the federal Government to establish a 90-day reserve as required by the IEP.
2. NSPI should immediately wean itself off the 'blood coal' from Columbia.
3. NSPI must be mandated to shift as quickly as possible to renewable energy—wind, tidal, geothermal and solar, where appropriate. While the technology exists, the will currently does not.
4. The most effective way to enact these changes is to make NSPI a Public Utility working in the public interest.

**CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Impose a carbon tax based on the rate of \$50 a tonne of Co2 emissions, approximately 12 cents a litre at the pumps.
2. Create an energy retrofit program for all buildings in the province.

To offset the financial hardships on lower income households, Nova Scotia should commence negotiations with the federal Government to enact a Guaranteed Liveable Income (GLI).

#### TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A moratorium on new 4-lane highways.
2. Reduce speed limits on highways to 80 kms/hr.
3. Introduce photo radar to enforce lower speed limits.
4. Toll all 4-lane highways with funds raised dedicated to public transit options.
5. Develop a rail policy to remove transport trucks from roads and onto rail lines.
6. Develop light passenger rail, specifically between Fall River and HRM, and between Windsor and HRM.

#### ECONOMIC FISCAL REFORM

The government must recognize the deficiencies of measuring the economy using the GDP. It was never designed to tell us about economic welfare or prosperity. Instead, Nova Scotia should be using the GPI—Genuine Progress Index—a balance sheet of social, economic, and environmental assets and liabilities that reflect the long-term trends that cause our assets to depreciate or increase in value. Only by factoring in the true and full costs of societies decisions can we draw a full and realistic cost benefit analysis. To view the GPI Transportation and Energy reports please go to <http://www.gpiatlantic.org>.

Thankyou very much for this chance to address the panel.

I remain,  
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