

The following are some comments on the Consultation Paper: Nova Scotia's Renewed Energy Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan.

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1. The primary reason for changing energy usage is not because "inexpensive sources of fossil fuels continue to decline" but because Nova Scotians are, on a per capita basis, major contributors to the changing composition of the atmosphere and its potentially serious effects on global climate.

2. The document does not forcefully provide the reason why electricity prices (and power generally) must increase. The reason is that we have hitherto subsidized electrical power production by running up an environmental debt. That debt is to be our bequeathed to our children. The environmental debt will eventually be transformed into a financial burden as the costs of mitigation become due.

3. It is important to accept that the cost of energy must include the cost of proper disposal of the waste - not simply using the atmosphere as a global dump. Unfortunately there is a massive cost to be met already as a result of our not properly disposing of carbon dioxide over the last century.

(It is curious that opponents of nuclear power generation are quick to condemn that means of production on account of there being no entirely satisfactory method of storing the waste. They appear not to realise that our current power generation wastes are arguably far more hazardous than radioactive waste because of their global influence on climate.)

4. It is not only unavoidable that the cost of electricity will increase, but it should be regarded as essential and beneficial. Thus it is not necessary to make apologies for this outcome; apologies are rather due for not paying the true cost earlier.

5. Nova Scotia is excessively dependent on the most environmentally damaging source of electrical power: coal burning without sequestration of the carbon dioxide waste. If the province wishes to continue burning coal it should develop its own plan to dispose of the waste. Otherwise the province should accept the alternative cost increases that would result from burning cleaner fuels such as natural gas. (That is probably only a medium term option.)

6. The increased use of natural gas for cleaner generation of power is independent of local gas production. Gas imports to the province are available from other parts of the country and overseas. The widespread recognition that natural gas is an environmentally preferable source of power may independently stimulate the search of gas offshore, but our choice of the fuel does not depend on local supplies.

7. It would be useful to publicize the range of electricity price increases that will occur over the next decade or more. (It seems likely that the increases suggested in the NS Renewed Energy Strategy are too low, which is why a range should be quoted.) It is unlikely to be the case that the cost increases would be significantly higher in Nova Scotia than elsewhere, so the province is not at a disadvantage. They have nothing to do with the increasing costs of fossil fuel, because they relate to the production of non-polluting energy (i.e. free of CO₂ emissions). The increases would occur even if fossil fuel prices were to decline.

8. Insufficient status has been given to a major clean energy resource awaiting utilization in Nova Scotia, that is, Fundy tidal power. It offers the prospect of massive clean power production. While it has

the disadvantage of not being continuous, it is regular and predictable. The improvement of the power grid linking NS with the rest of Canada offers the dual benefit of allowing the export of high quality (green) power from the tidal source at periods of peak production, but also allowing importation of power to balance fluctuating daily demand.

The low cost of producing power from installed turbines during night-time would encourage innovation in energy storage, such as off-peak heat storage, recharging of parked electric vehicles, and possibly generation of hydrogen. The energy storage does not need to be local but can be anywhere in the area that is supported by the grid. Where the energy is utilized in places served by hydropower, its usage can lead to effective energy storage as the hydropower output is regulated.

While the NS Renewed Energy Strategy document correctly pays attention to the need "to develop [tidal power] without abusing the livelihoods or rights of those who work in those offshore areas", it does need to be recognized that a motivation for utilizing that resource is to protect the livelihoods and rights of people throughout the country and world whose future is overshadowed by environmental threats consequent to our current methods of producing power.

9. The document suggests that cultivation of canola plants in Nova Scotia might occur in the near term to produce around 48 million litres annually of biodiesel. It is to be hoped that the economic and environmental benefits and costs of such a project will be thoroughly and objectively studied, with full regard to the losses of other biomass production that must accompany it.

10. The expressed hope "that Nova Scotia can have one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world, while improving the province's economic performance" surely needs to be accompanied with a target of emissions reduction that matches other jurisdictions which have already been more active, ambitious, and productive in meeting Kyoto targets.