

Having just returned from the climate change negotiations in Bali, I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the provinces climate change plan. Given recent events with respect to climate change, I commend you for your timing in reviewing the provinces plan. In particular, the IPCCs fourth assessment report, and the recent agreement in Bali provide a completely new context for climate change action in Nova Scotia. In addition, the recent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Australia, New Zealand's announcement of the first comprehensive domestic emissions trading system, California's climate change legislation, action by Congress and the Senate in the US toward a national cap and trade system in the US, announcements by a number of countries including Norway and New Zealand to become carbon neutral by 2050, and Germany's announcement of a unilateral target of 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 all provide a new context for climate change action in Nova Scotia.

What does all this mean for Nova Scotia? In the long term, it clearly means that we are moving as a jurisdiction toward complete internalization of GHG emissions. It means we will, in the long term, be fully liable for all our GHG emissions. It also means there will be tremendous opportunities for anyone able to reduce emissions, both in terms of the actual emission reductions achieved here, and the opportunity to export our solutions, particularly to other parts of Canada and the US. It means reducing GHG emissions wherever possible will become a social imperative, and an economic opportunity. Where we fail to reduce emissions, we will end up paying others to make reductions for us. Where we are able to do more than others, there will be tremendous opportunities.

In the medium term, we are likely to face increasing pressure over the next two years as a country to accept something in the range of 20 - 30 % emission reductions below 1990 levels by 2020. We would be well served to update our climate change plan and our energy strategy to plan for emissions reductions in this range with the long term goal of becoming more or less carbon neutral by 2050. I would encourage you to work with all Nova Scotians to develop a climate change plan and a new energy strategy that prepare us for these challenges ahead. What is required in my view is an ongoing process involving all major stakeholders tasked with the job of developing a realistic, measurable and achievable strategy to reaching these targets. The Nova Scotia Round Table may provide a useful model for such a process. Critical to the success of such a process is that the goal be set as a starting point, so that the process does not get bogged down in endless debate about what we can achieve, but rather focuses on how we can achieve what the science and international dynamics are telling us is required.

Meinhard Doelle, Associate Director  
Marine & Environmental Law Institute  
Dalhousie Law School, Room 408  
6061 University Avenue  
Halifax, NS, Canada  
B3H 4H9  
Phone: 902 494 1030