

[The following notes reflect comments made at a public workshop facilitated by Dalhousie oceanographer Bob Fournier in Truro on December 5, 2007.

This was one of 13 public workshops held around Nova Scotia to solicit public views on a renewed energy strategy and climate change action plan for Nova Scotia.

The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act sets ambitious goals for curbing greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining a prosperous economy. The government appreciates the time taken by the public to participate at the workshops and give advice on how best to achieve these important goals.

Please note that the views expressed in these notes reflect comments made by participants in the workshop. They have not been verified for factual accuracy.]

Truro, December 5, 2007 Public Consultation Workshop

Participants: 22

The Truro workshop drew an audience that was well-informed in some specifics of renewable energy and climate change, and generally entrepreneurial in their approach to finding solutions. Participants recommended creating new policies and incentives for climate change solutions. In particular they emphasized importance of public education about the energy issues, the importance of supporting technology R&D for sustainable solutions, the importance of appropriate (i.e. higher) pricing for energy to promote conservation, and the importance of using our own energy resources rather than exporting them.

Questions:

- Should we use or export our energy resources? Will exporting it raise our energy prices? Are we building windmills to sell power to US?
- Does NSPI pay same price for renewables as for other sources?
- Can we store the energy from wind power?
- Is offshore potential really greater than onshore potential?
- Are there more social problems getting wind power established here than elsewhere?
- How can we improve transportation efficiency, including metro transit in Halifax?
- Why aren't we reducing forest clearcutting and increasing forest management now?

Statements/Concerns/Recommendations:

- Education: critical because mindsets have to be changed. Schools are major part of solution. Children will lead the way to changed behaviors. Climate change and energy issues should be part of curriculum, not simply an optional discussion in schools.
- R&D: Energy and climate change require long term solutions, so R&D must be part of our strategy. Varied solutions will be needed for energy efficiency, renewables, etc,

specific to Nova Scotia. Strategy should promote R&D here, and with outside partners to find technical solutions.

- Cheap energy policy in NS means fewer options or lower payoff in reducing energy use. NS Government shouldn't fear increasing cost or taxes on energy (gasoline, electricity, etc). "Don't raise my taxes", but efficiency tax incentives seen as good tradeoff.
- Shortage of science capacity in NS: limits ability to assess or develop technologies. Needed for original R&D and for assessing how/which technologies to adopt.
- Alarm: people not engaged in the climate change reality yet. Issues are overwhelming. Needs education and information, e.g. local eco-action teams, e.g. Federal government and NB have models of potential sea level rise we should display.
- Economy: temporary drop in economy due to climate change strategies will happen, and not a bad thing, because long term effect will be good for economy.

Electricity

- Nuclear: not well understood, seems to be very expensive, long pay back. Canada nuclear is the safest, but importing nuclear power to NS is ok if needed.
- Electricity conservation: is temporary solution, will not get us to long term goal.
- Price for power: needs to rise to truly impact consumption. But increase should not flow to NSPI, but to conservation strategies.
- Direct the subsidy to low-income people: "Foolish move to give middle and upper income rebate on home fuel oil tax."
- Tidal power: can be pivotal part of solution.
- Need to import renewable power as well as produce it locally.
- Wind producers in NS take profits elsewhere. Need community based opportunities in NS, e.g. via Community Economic Development Investment Fund.
- You cannot sell wind power to NSPI profitably.
- Renewables (wind, tidal) would be received better locally if benefits stayed local.
- If renewables get incentives it will create economic advantages for NS.
- But giving higher prices (incentives) to renewables may be wrong move. Coal use should have highest price.
- For prices, Manitoba pays much less due to hydro. Ontario prices subsidized.

Other Renewables

- Biofuels: not obvious in consultation paper, but important. I.e. Can be grown locally, for local development. But tug of war between food and fuel is concern. "Need to burn a litre of gas to get litre of ethanol"!
- Geothermal: why not mentioned in consultation paper? What are regulations about putting heating loops in a lake?
- Reducing forest clearcuts and better forest management will reduce CC impact, and provide more sustainable stock for biomass fuel.
- Provincial departments (DNR, OED, DOE, et al) not in synch about forestry.
- Hydro resources are not fully developed. 1950s study identified Salmon river (?) and another that could be effectively dammed. Study shelved due to low prices of energy.

Efficiency and conservation

- Transportation is a key to climate change goals .
- Metro Transit (HRM) is important to improve.
- Incentives for buying fuel efficient vehicles would make a difference.
- Consider lower speed limit across province. “Lower speed limit with enforcement will pay for itself.”
- Vehicle inspection should include GHG limits. “We do not have right to drive polluting clunkers.”
- Appliances: “not economic for consumer to replace old refrigerator at current price of power.”
- Need devices to show power consumption of all appliances- in real time.
- Buildings (homes) in NS need higher standards mandated (LEEDS,etc.). Or builders will continue building for market only.