

[The following notes reflect comments made at a public workshop facilitated by Dalhousie oceanographer Bob Fournier in Amherst on December 17, 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.]

## **Amherst, December 17, 2007** **Public consultation Session –**

### **Participants: 18**

The Amherst session had an energetic debate on some key issues central to prices, conservation, and climate change policies. There was no consensus on the issues, in particular about the fairness and value of increased prices for energy, the relative costs of conservation and renewables. All shared concern that conservation and efficiency is crucial. Some participants shared knowledge on certain aspects of renewable sources (wind, geothermal, tidal) and conservation. Multiple questions and suggestions dwelt on the need for education and better information about energy, and concerns about the role of NSPI, and the need to help low income people handle the costs of energy and conservation. Some examples of preferred policy in other jurisdictions (New Brunswick, Quebec) were cited. Offshore and onshore energy issues did not arise.

### **Questions:**

- Why did NS lower price of energy HST since it's brings less incentive to conserve?
- Why should we be so concerned about Climate Change if our share of GHG is "3% of Canada which has less than 3% of world emissions"?
- What share of our income is needed to pay for power? In the past?
- Why not subsidize low income families for energy audits and retrofitting their home?
- Is NSPI one of the largest emitters (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>) in Canada?
- Why doesn't NSPI allow Standard offer (e.g. "feed-in tariff") for renewable power, since tendering (lowest bid) is far too difficult and risky for small scale producers?
- Why isn't Nuclear power allowed in NS? Was this enacted to protect coal mining?
- Are we measuring the health costs and effects of air pollution?

### **Statements/Concerns/Recommendations:**

#### **Overall policy:**

- Focus of policy should be heating, vehicles, and electricity.
- Energy prices should be allowed to rise to encourage conservation.

- Low income families need help with energy audits, retrofitting, and education.
- “People don’t know what to do for efficiency”. Education for efficiency paradox, education for children is sorely needed.
- Regulation and penalties are not way to go, education is better.
- Tax shifting (increased tax on energy, lower on income) is way to go.
- Government must set better example, less waste, turn off lights.
- We are small region but can be influential re: solid waste recycling
- Provincial Government should take lead, not leave it to Municipalities.
- Optimal policy will be combination of incentives and regulations
- Need commitment to Kyoto.
- New Brunswick has \$50 m. budget for home efficiencies, more low cost loans for retrofitting.

### **Electricity:**

- Higher energy costs are incentive to conserve energy.
- Higher energy costs are untenable for low income and rural population.
- Tidal has relatively low capital cost, so price should not be higher for long.
- “Standard offer” policy is crucial for small and medium wind producers. Bidding is dangerous system for renewables investment. “Feed-in tariff keeps money in the community, small communities thriving from it in Germany/Denmark!”
- Small wind producers can be viable if NSPI boosts transmission lines to allowed power sales out of province (to US).
- NSPI should open ceiling on net metering, and “kick-in” to boost transmission lines because lack of storage is barrier to independent producers.
- Maine-New Brunswick integration on power is preferred system.
- Nuclear waste can be recycled – “cold war is over”. Nuclear is solution to Climate Change.
- Nuclear waste has million year life, global risk.
- Why not burn biomass? It’s carbon neutral.
- Co-generation, and distributed power is best.
- CFL bulbs are too slow to light for practical use in farms, rural (cold) applications.

### **Transportation**

- Take advantage of new technologies: e.g. trucks built prior to 2007 emit more NO<sub>2</sub> than trucks built after 2007.
- Car pooling is needed for HRM, but not practical in rural areas.
- Biofuels should be investigated more, work with Dept of Agriculture.
- Growing corn for fuel is backward approach
- Need legislation on idling.
- Need sidewalks or cycling access in rural malls, public buildings.,

### **Conservation- Efficiency**

- Need education on available technologies, e.g. soft start motors, hot water-on - demand systems “hot water can be a significant part of electric bill”.
- Energy waste is everywhere.
- Residential light is only 4% of energy used in homes .

- Need “time of use” billing, a la Quebec.
- Geothermal is good payback
- Geothermal is not efficient. Uses lots of electric.
- LED lights should be promoted by NS
- Energy audits should be free for low income