

[The following notes reflect comments made at a public workshop facilitated by Dalhousie oceanographer Bob Fournier in Bridgewater on November 21, 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.]

### **Bridgewater Public consultation Session – November 21, 2007**

#### **18 participants**

Participants in the Bridgewater session had strong feedback on almost all aspects of the energy strategy renewal consultation document. Areas surrounding electricity and renewables were the main focus of numerous comments with conservation, government action and the offshore also taking prominent roles.

#### **Questions:**

- Why isn't the province seeking to do more with its energy strategy? Why don't we strive to establish a fossil free community / communities?
- Is there any measure of the energy currently being used inefficiently in the province and the costs associated?
- What strategies are being implemented to overcome the intermittency of the province's renewable energy?
- Why is "firming" (constant power generation to supplement intermittent renewables or storage) not more prominently discussed?

#### **Concerns / recommendations:**

##### **Electricity**

- Transmission regulations ("feed laws") need to reflect the strategy's stated objective of getting more renewable energy onstream
- All rules governing electricity generation and distribution must be defined quickly and decisively
- Electricity generation and distribution should be separated from the electrical utility to allow for greater competition
- Electricity transmission regulations within Atlantic Canada should be harmonized

- More transmission lines connecting Nova Scotia to the North American grid should be built to open markets and be paid for through a “user-pay” system i.e. Confederation Bridge
- Transmission lines to open markets should not be build unless the provincial transmission market is fully liberated and if energy imported comes from renewable sources
- A regional electricity / plan should be explored to eliminate Nova Scotia’s isolation and help develop Atlantic Canada as an energy hub
- Interconnection to the North American grid would only serve to encourage Nova Scotia power generators to produce more electricity from high-emission sources in order to capitalize on hungry American markets. This would result in reduced air quality for the province and would impact the health of residents
- Individual Nova Scotians should have the option of ensuring the electricity they buy is generated from renewable sources
- Net metering needs to be expanded to include a standard offer, guaranteed access to the grid and guaranteed supply from the grid if necessary for all producers from individual homeowners to neighbourhood and municipal projects

### **Renewable energy**

- More focus needs to be given to smaller scale renewable energy projects and the decentralization of electricity generation activities
- Renewable electricity generators should be allowed to put power into and take power from the electrical grid at will
- A strategy for “firming” renewable energy supply needs to be further established i.e. – what resources are going to be used to compensate for the intermittency of renewable energy?
- Energy price increases would be acceptable provided the energy used has demonstrated environmental gains / benefits
- Solar hot water heating needs to be encouraged in the energy strategy
- Any biomass / biofuels initiatives must take into consideration food needs and sustainable agriculture principles
- A price premium should be paid by the provincial utility for electricity from renewable sources
- Energy generation from waves should be given more consideration in the energy strategy

### **Efficiency and conservation**

- Conservation and efficiency are the best options for reducing GHGs and improving air quality
- Community and district energy systems – i.e. Dalhousie University - should be more prominent in the energy strategy as an efficiency technique

- Incentives should be given to consumers that reduce their energy bills from one year to the next – Like PG&E did in California
- The efforts of Conserve Nova Scotia are appreciated and necessary for the province to reduce GHG emissions – programs like the Christmas light exchange are a definite step in the right direction
- Price signals are needed to encourage people to conserve energy – one way to do this would be through the widespread availability of electricity micrometers (they allow people to measure the kW and electricity costs of small appliances)
- Provincial building codes should require that all new homes build are done so to the highest energy efficiency standards available at the time of construction
- Conservation and efficiency require education, more needs to be done to educate Nova Scotians on conservation and efficiency initiatives that are successful in other jurisdictions

### **Government action / intervention**

- Incentives and subsidies are a great way to kick start environmentally friendly businesses but they must be viable, market-driven entities in the long term
- A detailed business plan with objectives and dates should accompany the energy strategy so that the government is accountable for its commitments and progress can be measured by Nova Scotians
- The government should work with other provinces in Atlantic Canada on a regional energy strategy so the area can capitalize on energy opportunities
- Zero-interest loans and guaranteed perennial incentives should be made available to low-income homeowners so they can increase their energy efficiency and lower their energy bills
- More incentives need to be consistently delivered for solar hot-water heating over a long-term
- The government must really lead on energy. Not just commit to it – its buildings and vehicles must be green and it should ensure procurement procedures give priority to the most environmentally friendly options available
- Results from the energy strategy must be tangible and communicated to Nova Scotians regularly
- Nova Scotia needs a province-wide, subsidized bus system – the government should take the lead in its establishment
- Tax vehicles so their prices reflect the “true cost” of the pollution and GHGs they contribute
- The province should establish an anti-idling law and lower speed limits from 110 km/h to 100 km/h on provincial highways

### **Natural Gas / Offshore**

- Natural gas should be used for power generation instead of coal – when the “combined health and environmental costs” are factored in it is an economical choice
- Any windfall from the offshore should be used to fund renewable energy R&D exclusively so the province can move away from petroleum resource dependency
- Offshore natural gas activity could be replaced by offshore wind activity without negatively impacting the supply and services sector (they would adapt) or the economy

### **Energy Opportunities**

- Community groups and associations that encourage carpooling and public transportation projects should be supported so they can establish an effective provincial network