

[The following notes reflect comments made at a public workshop facilitated by Dalhousie oceanographer Bob Fournier in Kentville on November 22, 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.]

Kentville Public consultation session – November 22, 2007

21 participants

The Kentville session focused primarily on government initiatives / actions and gains that could be made through efficiency. Within these topics suggestions ranged from high-level ideas on areas where government should act to specifics on regulatory changes that would enhance energy efficiency. Electricity and renewable energy were also highlighted as areas of concern to participants. There were also questions raised as to GDP and economic growth as accurate quality of life indicators.

Questions:

- How is coal use for electricity generation the main source of GHG emissions when more energy is produced by petroleum products (from energy by PJ table)?
- What is being done to calculate the societal and environmental costs of coal imported from countries with low workplace health and safety standards?
- Is there any consideration given to lifting the moratorium on uranium mining and exploration in the energy strategy?
- Why doesn't Nova Scotia have a vehicle emissions testing program as part of the Motor Vehicle Inspection?
- If transmission capacity is increased to import electricity into the province what would happen if prices from the sources were to increase rapidly?
- Why are the priorities of growing the economy and reducing GHG emissions linked? Wouldn't Nova Scotians' quality of life be just as improved if the economy remained at current levels and GHGs were reduced?

Government action / intervention

- The province must ensure that land use guidelines promote efficiency and GHG reductions by promoting a balance of green spaces and compacted industrial / commercial / residential zones
- More incentives like the ecotrust program should be available to environmentally friendly and efficient businesses
- The number of cars on the road should be regulated to stabilize their impact on GHG emissions
- An inclining block rate structure should be implemented for energy products – the more you consume, the more you pay per unit consumed
- Low-income families must be subsidized so they can energy retrofit their homes and decrease their energy bills through increased energy efficiency
- To help reduce GHG emissions, rail transportation should be subsidized in lieu of roads being built and upgraded
- Speed limit reductions should be examined as a GHG reducing measure
- Speeding tickets should include an environmental degradation surcharge
- Climate change is the main energy issue and the energy strategy renewal should accurately reflect its urgency
- An environmental awareness educational program is key to ensure that Nova Scotians understand the necessity to quell climate change and develop a consensus plan moving forward
- The government needs to better prepare municipalities for the effects of climate change – there also needs to be more communication between the province and municipalities on climate change issues
- Students and teachers need to be exposed to environmentally friendly energy technologies so that the province has the skilled labour force needed to deal with changes in energy sources and practices
- The government must lead by example and ensure that all its buildings and practices meet strict efficiency and conservation standards
- Action on climate change must be executed quickly, any incentives must be for outside of the box thinking – the province should not dedicate resources to maintaining the status quo

Efficiency and conservation

- Electricity demand side management is crucial to the energy strategy – there should be a moratorium on the installation of electric heating systems and strong incentives to retrofit homes that currently have electric heat
- Efficiency should be the top priority and a list of best practices in energy efficiency and conservation needs to be established
- Programmable electronic thermostats should be mandatory in all new construction - energy savings of 10%
- Financial incentives should be given to all builders who build energy efficient homes

- Municipalities act should be modified to require builders and developers to have sustainable housing and development plans
- District heating systems should be considered to maximize energy efficiency
- Municipalities should require that all houses be built to capitalize on passive solar energy

Electricity

- A review of the law against nuclear power generation in Nova Scotia should be considered
- Net metering should be revised to allowed homeowners generating more electricity than they need to make money from those activities
- Decentralization is key to promoting renewable electricity – the market should be completely opened to allow players of all sizes to generate and distribute electricity locally
- Premium prices should be paid by the provincial utility for renewable electricity plus further incentives given if the electricity can be transmitted on demand

Renewable energy

- Solar heat should be given more weight in the energy strategy – there are chemical systems that allow it to be stored and used when needed (Sweden)
- Geothermal – though capital initially intensive could be a resource used for local / community heat distribution
- Stakeholders would like to invest more in renewable energy but they are prohibited in many areas by municipal regulations