

[The following notes reflect comments made at a public workshop facilitated by Dalhousie oceanographer Bob Fournier in Musquodoboit Harbour on November 29, 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.]

## **Musquodoboit Harbour public consultation session – November 29**

### **6 participants**

The public in Musquodoboit Harbour was primarily comprised of local residents who are passionate about the environment – 2 participants live in electricity self-sufficient houses. They were well informed and aware of the energy strategy renewal. Much of the discussion centered on renewable energy, local generation, transmission and distribution as well as renewable energy sources.

### **Questions:**

- What amount of locally produced natural gas is used in Nova Scotia?
- Would a tidal energy farm constitute a “mega-project”?
- What is the most effective way to broadly educate the public on the needs of the environment?

### **Concerns / recommendations**

#### **Electricity**

- The provincial government decided that coal should be subsidized and used for electricity generation – they should, through the energy strategy, find a way to stop it from negatively impacting the environment
- Make electricity more reliable – the province should open markets and provide incentives for homeowners to generate their own electricity

- Diversification should be achieved by enabling small producers – homeowners, community groups and municipalities need to have more involvement in the energy strategy
- Communities should be encouraged to finance, own and operate their own sources of renewable energy
- Ensure no further RFPs for renewable capacity are cancelled – it is detrimental to entrepreneurs and capital raising
- The electricity grid – transmission and distribution capacity – should be separated from the provincial utility and placed under the control of the province or a provincial board
- Electricity should be without cost for homeowners living in close proximity to large renewable energy projects
- New generation capacity should be added via micro projects – there should be a moratorium on projects over a certain size
- The provincial utility’s mandate should be changed to ensure they provide the most reliable, cheapest with least environmental cost electricity – not merely the cheapest electricity

### **Renewable**

- More emphasis should be placed on wood as a renewable energy resource – the Eastern Shore ships out enough wood to heat 1850 homes
- Wood is not entirely carbon neutral when harvesting and transportation are added to its costs
- Solar energy should have a bigger role in the energy strategy – new construction should be mandated to take maximum advantage of passive solar energy
- All homes should be built to include some sort of solar capturing device – for heat or water heating
- Renewable energy should be considered cost effective source because once the initial capital infrastructure costs are recovered there are no additional fuel charges
- Renewable sources are safe and reliable but generally cost more than coal

### **Conservation / efficiency**

- Conservation and efficiency are the most important aspects of the energy strategy renewal – educating consumers on their impact and supporting low-income individuals who want to conserve energy should be paramount
- Public transportation to rural areas should be increased and subsidized as part of the conservation initiatives taken by government
- There should be a special tax on recreational vehicles and their fuel – they are generally less efficient and not used as necessary transportation
- The energy strategy renewal should look to the conservation programs generated as a result of the last oil crisis for guidance on effective programs

- Efficiency efforts should focus on schools – ensure that the buildings and policies encourage maximum energy efficiency then initiate educational efforts explaining the impacts of energy efficiency
- Resistance to conservation / efficiency efforts must be eliminated – tenants and landlords in buildings where energy is included in rent must be reached by initiatives encouraging efficiency

### **Government action / intervention**

- Business interests must be balanced with public interests and environmental concerns – perhaps electricity should be a crown responsibility
- Security of supply needs to be present in the energy strategy renewal
- The government should encourage the development of more businesses like “Thermo-Dynamics”
- There is too much focus on grants, incentives, rebates etc. in the consultation document – the renewal should concentrate on implementing standards and enforcement structures
- Disincentives also help increase awareness and change.