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CLEAN & CLEANER

Towards a new energy action plan for Canada

MOVING TO A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE FOR CANADA

In September of 2003, the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance brought together almost 100 representatives from 68 different organizations (energy utilities, manufacturers, non-profits, associations) to develop a Vision Statement for a Sustainable and Energy Efficient society. Although their focus was Ontario, it is relevant for all of Canada. The main features of this vision for 2010 include:

- Government leaders are committed to sustainability and energy efficiency; planning is long-term and comprehensive and our energy vision is clear and coordinated.
- Canadians are committed to sustainability and energy efficiency; renewable resources have been harnessed and the urban landscape transformed.
- Education and information are key to improved energy efficiency; educating consumers is the foundation for energy efficiency improvements; consumer purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by energy information and energy performance feedback is available to all consumers.
- Energy pricing is rational and incentive programs are complementary; a level playing field exists for investment in demand and supply, local energy networks increasingly replace reliance on provincial grid and comprehensive pricing structure reflects true cost of energy.
- Efficient, smart technologies enable energy management; smart metering and control systems; research and development keeps expanding the potential for more savings.
- Codes and standards promote the most efficient products, buildings and practices.
- Market rules and regulation address demand and supply.
- The energy services market is well developed and profitable.

Some of these ideas were identified and explored in another Alliance session held in November. To achieve that vision, some of the major steps include:

COMPREHENSIVE, LONG TERM SUSTAINABLE ENERGY POLICIES — Leaders at all levels of government must be committed to sustainability and energy efficiency.

REGULATED DSM PROGRAMS — Demand Side Management (DSM) programs have proven to be an effective means of achieving large, permanent energy savings. Effective and cost-efficient programs have been developed for both natural gas and electricity systems in Canada and around the world. When a Local Distribution Company (LDC) like Enbridge or Direct Energy helps consumers to reduce their energy use (and their energy bill) through a DSM program, then the government picks up the difference and makes sure that the LDC doesn't lose money because of the program. In other provinces with provincially owned utilities, these utilities are in the best position to deliver these programs and many already have or are developing such programs.

CONTINUALLY INCREASING CODES & STANDARDS — It is important to ensure that major energy consuming appliances and new buildings meet a minimum level of energy efficiency

INTERVAL METERS AND TIME OF USE RATES — All consumers, not just the larger energy users, need to be able to realize the large benefits to society of postponing some of their energy use to times when electricity is more readily available and much less costly. This would require the use of "smart" electrical meters that keep track of when electricity is used and a rate structure that reflects the very different costs of electricity at "peak" times (typically weekdays) and "non-peak" times (typically evenings).

GREATER USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY — Renewable energy technologies such as wind, small scale hydro, and biomass must become a larger part of our energy future. In the short term, the best way to ensure greater use of these technologies is for governments or their agencies to issue Requests for Proposals for specific capacities (i.e., 2 tract to the most competitive bid. The next step is to establish a Renewable Portfolio Standard that would require an increasing percentage of all electricity to be generated from renewable resources.

DISTRICT ENERGY/DISTRIBUTED GENERATION — Local energy efficient district energy systems that provide both heat and electricity to communities and energy efficient distributed generation systems that produce heat and electricity for one facility should also be part of our energy future. Forget those transmission lines; companies and communities could make their power on site.