

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FOR THE MONTH FEBRUARY, 2007

WHO TO WRITE AND WHAT TO ASK FOR:

Write to BC's Minister of the Environment, Barry Penner, (with copies to the NDP Environment Critic, and the Premier, if you have time) in response to the throne speech of Feb. 13, 2007. Tell Mr. Penner you are extremely pleased his government is planning to reduce BC's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions more effectively than any other province, state or national government in North America. Tell him you applaud the decision to scrap the two planned coal fired power projects.

However, BC's plan can still be improved. The two most important changes to ask for are: 1) replacing highway expansion programs such as the "Gateway project" with expansion of cycling, transit and LRT options and transport demand management and 2) redirecting the \$89 million designated for promoting the use of hydrogen as a fuel towards the Innovative Clean Energy Fund, which will assist the development of clean, alternative energy solutions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - from The BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA)

Victoria, February 13, 2007

The BCSEA welcomed the government's commitment to tackle global warming, as part of its new Pacific Leadership Agenda. "The government's new plans to tackle global climate change offers far more than we expected" said Guy Dauncey, President of the BC Sustainable Energy Association. "It's not as much as we need, but by emphasizing electrical self sufficiency from clean renewable sources and an ethic of personal conservation, this moves us towards the changes we need."

The government has declared that it will reduce BC's greenhouse gas emissions to 33% below today's level by 2020, or 10% below the 1990 level. This is 20% above the European Union's 2020 goal for all 27 member states, but better than California's goal, which is to match its 1990 level by 2020. BC's commitment to establish an interim goal for 2012 will allow a comparison with the Kyoto goal (6% below 1990 by 2012).

This puts BC ahead of California in the boldness of its plan, and makes BC's goal the best in North America, but behind Europe's 27 member states. This gives BC the 28th most progressive goal to tackle climate change in the world, and as Dauncey says, "This is something to celebrate." "These commitments represent the first significant steps by the BC Government to address what may be the most important issue facing us today," said Tom Hackney, the BCSEA's Policy Director

One new commitment effective immediately, is BC will become the first jurisdiction in North America, if not the world, to require 100% carbon sequestration for any coal-fired power project. This will cause BC's two planned coal-fired power projects in Princeton and Tumbler Ridge to reconsider their projects. Dauncey supports the government's commitments, "If coal plants can't contain all their greenhouse gas emissions, they should not be built. BC has plenty of greenhouse gas neutral energy resources without coal." A report issued by the US Department of Energy in January 2007 stated that CO2 sequestration was "years away", because sequestration technology is not sufficiently mature to be implemented at production scale."

The BCSEA also welcomes many other initiatives that were announced as part of the plan, including the establishment of a Climate Action Team to move the B.C. government towards carbon neutrality by 2010, and the creation of a \$25 million Innovative Clean Energy Fund to assist with the development of clean, alternative energy solutions. "The \$89 million that has been committed for hydrogen fuelling stations and a hydrogen highway from Whistler to Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria, on the other hand, is a waste of

money,” Dauncey said. “Hydrogen is the wrong way to go. The future of transportation in BC will be electric, using plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The \$89 million would deliver far more if it was added to the Innovative Clean Energy Fund.” If the government were to transfer the \$89 million for hydrogen vehicles to a planned expansion for cycling, transit, LRT, and transport demand management, this would produce a thousand fold greater decline in greenhouse gas emissions than having 20 hydrogen buses on the road.

The Government also committed to develop a new Green Building Code for BC, the commitment to introduce climate change education into BC’s schools, the new Green Cities Project, and the announced incentives for home retrofits, energy audits, and smart metering.

Overall, the BCSEA gives the new commitments a 75% score. “The big piece that is lacking is a commitment to stop the Gateway project,” Dauncey said. “With its major new building program for roads and bridges, it will encourage more traffic and produce more emissions. The Throne Speech’s statement that it ‘will reduce congestion, improve traffic flow and reduce emissions from idling’ may be true for the first year”, Dauncey said, “but after that it will attract more traffic and generate more greenhouse gas emissions.”

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"Ignoring climate change will be the most costly of all possible choices, for us and our children." - Peter Ewins, British Meteorological Office

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