

March 2006, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, 75th Annual General Meeting Resolution

AN ENERGY PLAN FOR MANITOBA

Preamble: Energy issues are at the forefront of political, environmental and economic discussions regarding Manitoba's future.

There are a variety of energy development intentions in the works or underway in Manitoba and the government regularly presents information on its record regarding energy to various audiences, however no comprehensive energy plan for the entire province is yet in place.

The Manitoba government said it intends to undertake a public discussion and debate about the energy future for our province. To date, there has been neither public discourse on the subject of energy planning nor engagement of the public to determine priorities for Manitoba's energy future. In the meantime, our government is proceeding with its agenda on energy that may or may not be in step with the Manitobans' views or expectations.

Many North American jurisdictions have mandated specific new renewable energy targets to be sourced from their own economy. However, when it comes to Manitoba, questions abound in relation to its plans for wind, solar, biomass, etc. Issues also exist in relation to the environmental impact standards in place for the new renewable energy plants, infrastructure, and systems being built in our province.

The Government of Manitoba has acknowledged the need to plan for the province's environmental and economic future in various other ways. Commitments have been made and in some instances, processes and/or legislation have been initiated. Planning for Manitoba's energy future is the next logical step, and it needs to begin right away.

Resolution: **That the Government of Manitoba act on the acknowledged need to initiate a public dialogue and planning process to arrive at an energy plan for Manitoba. Further, the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology should undertake a process during 2006 and 2007 that includes planning for 10, 25, 50, and 100 year segments, with the objectives to:**

- a) define environmental protection and conservation of our natural ecosystems as primary considerations in terms of energy use in Manitoba;**
- b) achieve energy self-sufficiency within the context of the precautionary principle¹ and the principles of sustainable development²;**

¹ Defined as: "Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.", per the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992).

- c) establish that energy must be available to Manitoba users first and for export commitments second;**
- d) create an energy plan that respects the imperative of equity - which includes geographic equity (for all Manitobans) and intergenerational equity;**
- e) create an energy plan that respects and accommodates the rights and voices of First Nations/Aboriginal peoples, so that future energy development initiatives will proceed with full and meaningful involvement of affected First Nations and Aboriginal communities, and perhaps including agreements for partnership, royalties, and/or compensation for environmental effects;**
- f) ensure that access to information, transparency, and meaningful public and sectoral involvement are integral to the process to develop Manitoba's energy plan;**
- g) undertake a complete analysis of current assets, benefits, risks, liabilities and public debt incurred to date in terms of Manitoba's energy system – including analysis of capacity/supply, demand, conservation potential, environmental damage and thresholds for all current energy sources – as a prerequisite to the energy planning process;**
- h) conduct (as part of the energy planning process) an environmental assessment and review of Manitoba's existing energy sectors that includes assessment of cumulative effects of the existing system and any mitigation or compensation to date;**
- i) include identification of existing and potential environmental impacts and costs for all the various future energy generation options;**
- j) emphasize new renewable forms of energy to meet future energy needs and define targets for conservation and demand-side management of energy;**
- k) ensure that all future energy projects will be considered and assessed in their entirety – including all components and potential effects;**
- l) include the definition and adoption of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) for Manitoba that reflects definitions (such as those adopted elsewhere in Canada and in over 20 US states) that emphasize and reflect the importance of new renewable energy forms through the establishment of targets and incentives; and**

² See the appendix at the end of this Resolution.

- m) provide annual public updates for Manitobans and an analysis every five years that includes trends in all aspects of the plan.**

An Energy Plan For Manitoba Appendix

Principles of Sustainable Development

1. Integration of Environmental and Economic Decisions:
 - a) Economic decisions should adequately reflect environmental, human health and social effects.
 - b) Environmental and health initiatives should adequately take into account economic, human health and social consequences.

2. Stewardship
 - a) The economy, environment, human health and social well-being should be managed for the equal benefit of present and future generations.
 - b) Manitobans are caretakers of the economy, the environment, human health and social well-being for the benefit of present and future generations.
 - c) Today's decisions are to be balanced with tomorrow's effects.

3. Shared Responsibility and Understanding
 - a) Manitobans should acknowledge responsibility for sustaining the economy, the environment, human health and social well-being, with each being accountable for decisions and actions in a spirit of partnership and open cooperation.
 - b) Manitobans share a common economic, physical and social environment.
 - c) Manitobans should understand and respect differing economic and social views, values, traditions and aspirations.
 - d) Manitobans should consider the aspirations, needs and views of the people of the various geographical regions and ethnic groups in Manitoba, including Aboriginal peoples, to facilitate equitable management of Manitoba's common resources.

4. Prevention

Manitobans should anticipate, and prevent or mitigate, significant adverse economic, environmental, human health and social effects of decisions and actions, having particular careful regard to decisions whose impacts are not entirely certain but which, on reasonable and well-informed grounds, appear to pose serious threats to the economy, the environment, human health and social well-being.

5. Conservation and Enhancement

Manitobans should

- a) maintain the ecological processes, biological diversity and life-support systems of the environment;
- b) harvest renewable resources on a sustainable yield basis;
- c) make wise and efficient use of renewable and non-renewable resources; and
- d) enhance the long-term productive capability, quality and capacity of natural ecosystems.

6. Rehabilitation and Reclamation

Manitobans should

- a) endeavour to repair damage to or degradation of the environment; and
- b) consider the need for rehabilitation and reclamation in future decisions and actions.

7. Global Responsibility

Manitobans should think globally when acting locally, recognizing that there is economic, ecological and social interdependence among provinces and nations, and working cooperatively, within Canada and internationally, to integrate economic, environmental, human health and social factors in decision making while developing comprehensive and equitable solutions to problems.