



Canadian Solar Industries Association  
*L'Association des Industries Solaires du Canada*

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## **CanSIA's Activities and Actions in 2005**

### **Overview**

Despite the challenges that have faced CanSIA as it restructured this year, the association has made significant strides in developing the foundation for significant changes in policies and programs that will support the solar industry in coming years.

CanSIA focused on laying the groundwork on many issues – issues that needed fundamental work and development before CanSIA could take effective positions and advocate for changes. CanSIA's work has focused on:

- Building support for CanSIA and developing contacts (membership levels and building relations with government and non-governmental organizations).
- Restructuring CanSIA's internal organization. CanSIA has operated as a part time organization through much of its past history (1987-2002). It was only with the hiring of the current Executive Director, Rob McMonagle, at the end of 2002 that CanSIA started to have the resources necessary to deal with issues of concern to the industry. As part of the operations of CanSIA over the last 3 years there has been a complete restructuring of CanSIA's internal processes. The restructuring was completed successfully this year with the vote at the AGM (November 4, 2005) for changes in the membership structure and fees. CanSIA's membership is now based on the size of the member firm and the membership fees are now in line with other renewable energy trade associations such as CanWEA and SEIA.
- Developing basic information and statistics on the solar industry. Examples include the comparison of international sales and government support for solar, estimates of the job creation potential and the environmental benefits of solar, and the costs of the technologies.
- Identifying the barriers that the solar industry faces in Canada and developing "issue reports" on these issues with recommendations on how these barriers can be reduced. Examples include the performance issues of PV modules and the lack of CSA standards and certification for solar thermal systems.
- "Sunny Days Ahead – A Solar Plan for Canada" was released in November 2004. The development of an industry strategy, documentation on the potential of solar in Canada and recommendations on what is needed to achieve this potential had been a major initiative in 2004 and had provided direction in 2005 on the needs of the industry. It has allowed CanSIA to focus on a number of key advocacy issues including changing Class 43.1, introducing financing for solar thermal projects, and the need to introduce a program in Canada for deployment of PV.
- Preliminary advocacy campaigns to develop experience. Campaigns that have been carried out included the REDI lapse of funding (2003), "Solar on the Hill" (2004), and Budget 2005 (2005). These campaigns have allowed CanSIA staff and industry members to gain experience and to develop the necessary tools to make future advocacy actions effective. In 2005 CanSIA began a long term campaign to have changes in Class 43.1 introduced and to introduce a feed-in tariff program for PV in Ontario – both these should have successes in 2006.
- Increasing the level of awareness of solar and issues in policy and decision makers, the media, and in the public.



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While the listing of CanSIA's major activities and accomplishments in the last year is encouraging – it should be noted that most of it is simply laying the groundwork for future activities that will make a difference. The major accomplishments in meeting CanSIA's objectives will come in the period 2006-2007.

## Specific Actions & Activities

### Member-Based Activities

#### Membership

Membership continued to climb in 2005 – rising from 150 at the end of 2004 to 173 as of December 15, 2005 – a 15% increase. Membership is now double what it was in December 2002 (84 members).

#### Conference

CanSIA reintroduced its annual conference in 2002 (it was discontinued in 1988) and it has seen attendance grow annually. This year's conference, held in Ottawa on November 3-5, was extremely successful and was highlighted by the keynote address by the Honourable Donna Cansfield, Ontario Minister of Energy.

#### Communication Activities

- CanSIA's website, [www.cansia.ca](http://www.cansia.ca) was changed considerably in early 2005. Currently the website receives about 12,500 unique hits each day.
- It was decided by CanSIA's board in mid 2005 to discontinue all support of public education except through the website. CanSIA does not have the staff resources to handle the high volume of phone and email inquiries that the office receives. Currently all inquiries are referred to CanSIA's website.
- Due to a loss of a key member of CanSIA's staff in the early summer and the work on restructuring it was necessary to cut back on some of CanSIA's communication activities in the later half of the year:
  - CanSIA's monthly electronic news bulletin, Solar Currents, was temporarily stopped from August – November but has been reintroduced in December.
  - CanSIA's quarterly print journal, SOLutions, was stopped being published this year. It is being reintroduced in 2006 with the first issue expected in February.

#### Industry Ethics

Every industry needs to monitor the actions of its members. CanSIA has intervened on the appropriate occasions to ensure that ethical and professional standards are maintained in a timely and courteous manner - supporting not just the customer but also the reputation of the industry as a result. Three reviews were carried out in 2005 because of complaints to CanSIA. In one case the complaint was found to be valid and CanSIA pressured the member to take appropriate action to resolve the issue. CanSIA initiated an Ethics Review Committee to deal with complaints this year.

#### Committees

An important element of any member-based organization is the efforts of volunteers. CanSIA has initiated the development of a number of member-based committees including:

- PV Education Committee
- ST Education Committee
- Atlantic Canada Caucus
- Ontario PV Caucus



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- Alberta Solar Caucus
- BC Solar Caucus
- Class 43.1 Working Committee

## **Meetings Held**

CanSIA has held extensive meetings at the federal, provincial and municipal levels, including:

### Federally

- Meeting with Minister's staff at: Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, Industry Canada, Ministry of Housing, Public Works, Finance Canada, Prime Minister's Office
- Meetings with officials on a regular basis at: Natural Resources Canada; Environment Canada, Industry Canada, CMHC, International Trade, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Finance Canada, National Research Council, Canadian Coast Guard, Parks Canada, National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy, Sustainable Development Technology Canada
- House Standing Committee on Sustainable Development: Appeared twice
- Senate Committee on Natural Resources: Appeared once
- Political Meetings: Jack Layton (leader of NDP); Bob Mills (Conservative Environment critic); Bloc Québécois Caucus

### Provincially

- Meeting with the Ministers of Energy of PEI, Ontario and Alberta
- Meeting with Ministry of Energy staff of BC, Manitoba, Ontario, PEI, NWT
- Presentations to the Ontario Conservation Task Force and the Quebec Legislature Committee of Labour (on Quebec's future energy supply)
- In Ontario CanSIA's staff and the Ontario PV Caucus have been working hard to introduce feed-in tariffs that include PV at a rate of \$0.43- \$0.82 per kWh. A separate report on these activities can be found on the website under Solar For Ontario Now!

### Municipally

- Meetings with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- City of Toronto: Regular meetings on specific support programs for solar – includes meetings with the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, City staff and City councillors
- City of Ottawa: regular meetings on the city's refusal to issue building permits for SDHW systems
- CanSIA has had regular correspondence with: the towns of Pickering, Milton, Okotoks, Vulcan and the cities of White Rock, Vancouver and Regina.

### Internationally

- CanSIA is a founding member of the Solar Thermal Industry Advisory Council to the International Energy Agency (2004)



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- This year the various PV trade associations held discussions on the formation of the PV International Industry Council – CanSIA has participated by teleconference calls at all meetings.

#### Non-Governmental Organizations

- CanSIA has held extensive consultations and discussions with: David Suzuki Foundation; Pollution Probe; Canadian Consumers Association; Pembina Institute; Greenpeace; Sierra Club; Ontario Sustainable Energy Association; BC Sustainable Energy Association, Association of Canadian Community Colleges; Canadian Home Builders' Association; Canadian Electrical Association; Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association.

#### Community Groups

- CanSIA is providing support for local community action groups who want to develop local “solar buyer co-ops.” Groups include those from: BCSEA (BC), Yukon, OSEA (Ontario), Peace River, Toronto, Lion's Head, Peterborough, Ottawa, Kingston, Perth, and Bathurst NS.

#### Media

Especially since the *Solar on the Hill* campaign in 2004, CanSIA has increasingly been requested for feedback and comment by the media. Major articles in four national papers have featured CanSIA prominently in the last year. While tracking of media coverage is currently limited due to the lack of resources – there are now typically 2-3 major stories on solar monthly in the national media. CanSIA is shaping the future and strengthening the industry's growth.

#### Training and Human Resources

As the industry grows the need for trained, professional installers, technicians and designers will become acute. CanSIA is working with industry, governments, and educational institutes to insure that the solar industry has the trained workforce that will be required in the future.

PV Training – CanSIA's PV Technicians Certificate is offered by Seneca College and the first two students graduated in 2004. Both are now working in the industry. Currently there are 11 students enrolled in the program. CanSIA has initiated discussions with BCIT and the Community College of Northern New Brunswick to offer the program in those provinces.

Solar Thermal Training – CanSIA has completed the development of a SDHW Installer Certification Program. A test workshop was held in BC in August and was fully rolled out during the CanSIA conference in November. 28 members took the course with 19 writing the exam. CanSIA is also advocating that all government programs for the installation of SDHW systems must be done by CanSIA certified installers.

ACCC-REACT – CanSIA is a sitting member on the Association of Canadian Community Colleges' advisory committee on training for the renewable energy industries (Renewable Energy Advisory Committee on Training).

Solar Energy Research Network – CanSIA sits on the advisory board of the SERC – a newly formed organization of over 15 Canadian universities who are coordinating research on solar technologies. CanSIA has provided support for the creation of this organization as it will improve the quality of Canadian research in solar as well as provide trained graduates in engineering and the sciences knowledgeable on solar.



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## **Positions, Issues & Presentations**

All these can be found on the CanSIA Reports page of the website ([www.cansia.ca/reports.asp](http://www.cansia.ca/reports.asp))

### Position Papers

CanSIA has developed strong positions on a number of issues that affect the solar industry and has taken action to insure that these issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the solar industry. The position papers can be found on CanSIA's website and in 2005 included:

- A Solar PV Roof Program for Canada (Jan 05)
- Valuing Grid-Connected Solar Electricity (Feed in Tariffs for Ontario) (May 05)
- Expanding Class 43.1 to Including Solar (June 05)
- Performance Standards for Solar Electric Modules (June 05)

### CanSIA Issue Reports

These reports provide information and details on issues related specifically to solar in Canada. In 2005 CanSIA issued four:

- Jobs Creation Potential of Solar Energy (Jan 05)
- The State of the Solar Industry (Jan 05)
- International Sales and Budgets for Solar (May 05)
- Budget 2005 – No Bright Light for Solar (June 05)

### CanSIA Presentations & Submission

- CanSIA has presented to a wide variety of stakeholders in 2005. The presentations were made by not just the Executive Director and the board members but by members of the industry representing CanSIA. CanSIA now maintains a speaker list of members who have volunteered to represent CanSIA. Some of the key presentations (these are listed on the website) include:
  - Workshop held in conjunction with the Ministers of Energy Meeting in N.S
  - Pollution Probe Workshop (Toronto) on developing a Renewable Energy Strategy for Ontario
  - NewERA conference (Calgary) on distributed power

## **Advocacy**

There's no question that CanSIA's improved profile has stimulated much more interest and awareness (two key factors for change) on solar. However before CanSIA can carry out an effective government relations campaign it is necessary to develop the issues and the industry position on them. Much of this preparatory work has been done in the last two years with the result that CanSIA is beginning to work towards getting changes introduced.

### Solar on the Hill (November 2004)

During CanSIA's annual conference held in November 2004 CanSIA coordinated 54 meetings between its members and Members of Parliament, Senators and senior ministry officials. A total of 46 members participated in meeting 72 parliamentarians.



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#### Budget 2005 (January - February 2005)

CanSIA met extensively with the political parties prior to the 2005 federal budget – including the NDP, Conservatives, and the Prime Minister's Office. A letter writing campaign was initiated in which 43 members participated. While no specific announcements were made related to solar a number of the programs announced could include significant benefits to solar. CanSIA continues to work with government officials to maximize the benefits of these programs during the programs' development stage.

#### Class 43.1 (February – November 2005)

CanSIA and members meet with various departments that have interest in the tax act. These include Finance Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, and Industry Canada. The election call prevented the introduction of a new budget (and hence the inclusion of any changes). While there are positive signs from most government agencies on CanSIA's recommended changes, there are still a number of barriers that must be overcome first.

#### PV Feed-in Tariffs interims in Ontario (February – December 2005)

CanSIA and the Ontario PV Caucus have been working hard on this issue. The various energy agencies will be submitting their reports to the Ontario government at the end of December with the government expected to make an announcement in February – March 2006. The program would then be expected to start in the summer of 2006. CanSIA has developed an extensive Government Relations Campaign to insure that solar is included in this program.



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## CanSIA's Actions are Beginning to Make A Difference

It must be kept in mind that CanSIA's staff has only been working for a year in moving a wide variety of issues of concern forward and has only been able to spend 8% of their time on actions. Prior to this almost all staff time was directed towards completing the government-funded projects, fundraising, and the restructuring of CanSIA. Nevertheless there are significant successes that are setting the stage for major changes in support by the end of 2005.

### **Industry Wide Actions**

#### Net Zero Energy Homes (NZEH)

CanSIA is a leading member of the NZEH Coalition that represents a broad range of stakeholders including Climate Change Central, Pollution Probe, and Dupont. Net Zero Energy Homes include both PV and solar water heating technologies. CMHC announced the first phase of this program in the summer - the construction of 1,500 Net Zero Energy Homes by 2010.

#### An Insurance Program for Solar Companies in Canada

CanSIA has been working to develop a program in which its member companies would qualify for reduced business insurance (as part of a group plan). Savings for individual firms may be in the range of 15-25%. Program is planned to be announced in the summer of 2006.

#### Ontario North Program for On-site Generation for Small Businesses

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, as part of its Small Business Energy Conservation Program, announced in the spring of 2005 an "Internal Generation" program for small businesses that operate in northern Ontario. The program covers a wide variety of applications including PV, solar hot water and pool heating, and solar air heating and provides up to 50% of the costs. It is the first program for solar in any province in Canada. CanSIA consulted extensively with the Fund during the development stage of the program.

#### Solar Right to Light

CanSIA has been involved in helping resolve three "right to light" cases (2-PV, 1-ST) which threatened solar energy systems from shading due to new construction. In two cases we were successful in stopping the new construction or providing compensation – protecting the owner's right to the light falling on their property. Canada is the only developed nation that does not have right to light legislation in place. CanSIA has produced an issue report on this and with funding support will be able to take action to resolve this on a national level.

### **PV Specific**

#### 1 MW PV Power Plant in Toronto

CanSIA had consulted extensively with the City of Toronto and its various agencies on the recently announced 1 MW PV power plant initiative for downtown Toronto. The first 100 kW segment of this project was awarded in December 2005.

#### Net Metering

CanSIA has been involved with consultations in BC and Ontario on recently announced legislation on net metering in these two provinces. CanSIA continues to hold discussions with other provinces, including Quebec and PEI, on their plans to introduce similar legislation. CanSIA representatives also sit on Measurement Canada's technical committee to develop standards for net meters, and on the CSA technical committee that is developing micro-generation interconnection standards.



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## **Solar Thermal Specific**

### Changes in REDI

CanSIA was instrumental in getting REDI renewed (at a 100% increase in annual funding), insuring that more government funds are directed at deployment subsidies for solar systems and having the program put more focus on residential applications. CanSIA was instrumental in lobbying to have Evacuated Tubes included in REDI's new support terms. CanSIA continues to work with NRCan to insure that the program is appropriate and provides maximum benefit to the solar thermal industry and has initiated talks on the future of REDI after the current budget expires in March 2007

### Program for the CSA Certification of SDHW Systems

NRCan announced in 2005 a support program covering up to 90% of the cost for SDHW system manufacturers to certify their systems and collectors to CSA F379.1 and F383. This is a direct result of CanSIA's lobbying and advocacy efforts.

### Changes In the National Plumbing Code

CanSIA has taken the lead in making changes in the National Plumbing Code to allow for the legal installation of solar water heating in Canada. This issue has been highlighted by actions of the City of Ottawa, which is refusing to issue building permits for solar hot water systems. This has been an ongoing problem for the industry as homeowners cannot get building permits for solar installations and are often faced with the cancellation of home insurance once a system is installed on their home. Many of these problems originated in the late 1980s when the industry collapsed and was unable to respond to issues that were being introduced into the code at that time. CanSIA has been instrumental in getting NRCan, CSA, and the Ontario Ministry of Housing to begin work on resolving these issues. In November 2005 the City of Ottawa accepted CanSIA's recommended changes and this is now used as a template if similar problems occur in other jurisdictions.

### "1,000 System" Initiative

Local community groups are starting to work on developing local solar "buyer co-ops." CanSIA is coordinating the activities between these groups on a national basis and with the support of a national environmental organization is working to develop an initiative to see the installation of 1,000 solar domestic hot water systems in Canada within 3 years. This initiative should be announced in the early summer of 2006.