

Check Against Delivery

Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources

Energy Efficiency in Buildings Strategy Launch
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Good morning everyone. It's certainly a pleasure for me to be in this beautiful building, which is distinguished by its unique design, energy efficiency and high air quality.

I think it's fitting to remind everyone that September 18 is proclaimed as Terry Fox Day. Yesterday in the Legislature Gallery, we had the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Fox joining us, and it was a great day. I see you have some Terry Fox activities happening in your lobby and, of course, all the other positive things that occur with that.

This building has demonstrated energy performance that is 50 percent better - 50 percent better - than the Model National Energy Code for buildings. I congratulate the B.C. Cancer Foundation. What we see here is how energy efficiency and innovation go hand in hand to create cost savings in heating, cooling and a healthy work environment inside and, ultimately, clean air outside. It is the crux of this important announcement today.

I am very pleased to announce the launch of the province's energy efficiency in buildings strategy, fulfilling the commitment that this government made in November of 2002 when we released the B.C. Energy Plan. As many of you are aware, environmental responsibility is a cornerstone of that plan. We are so lucky here in British Columbia to have such a wealth of resources, yet at the same time, we should all recognize the need to use our ample resources responsibly. Clean air means healthy families and healthy communities, and our energy plan is helping us achieve that.

In this plan we identified a need to improve energy efficiency in new and in existing buildings. This will help us conserve energy, which decreases our demand on fossil fuels. Given today's rising fuel costs - and I'm certain we're all aware of that - and in recognition of all the new energy efficiency technologies available now, we know that this a realistic goal to achieve over the next number of years.

So you might ask: how do we propose to achieve increased energy efficiency in buildings? We will begin by establishing voluntary cost-effective targets for new and existing buildings.

For example, let's look at our houses. Most homes built in the seventies and eighties have an EnerGuide rating of 61 on a scale of 100. When I went to school that was a C-minus. Newer homes built in the 1990s are generally rated at 68. I guess that's a C-plus.

We are aiming for the EnerGuide in houses rating of 80 for all new home construction by 2010. This represents a 32 percent reduction in total energy demand for an average home. Today, with newer technology and building components and equipment such as heating and cooling systems, along with rebates and tax incentives in specific energy efficiency components, it is realistic and financially prudent to make investments in energy efficiency. A homeowner will typically recover any costs for upgrading their windows, their doors, heating systems and insulation through energy savings in five to nine years and save money on energy bills for the life of the house. That makes energy efficiency a worthwhile investment.

A number of incentive programs, such as our PST exemption on high-efficiency furnaces and CMHC's new energy efficiency program, will reduce those costs and therefore the payback period. The same applies to commercial and institutional buildings. There are social and economic benefits to our strategy as well.

One of our five great goals for the golden decade ahead is to create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada. Our energy efficiency and building strategy will increase employment opportunities in research and development, manufacturing, construction and private investment. Provincial building targets for new construction could create 20,000 person years of additional employment in B.C. from '05 to 2020. The target for retrofitted residential buildings could create another 32,000 person years in the same period.

Another golden decade goal is to lead the world in sustainable environmental management with the best air and water quality management. Conserving energy through energy efficiency actions reduces the growing demand for new energy sources and reduces greenhouse gas emissions of up to 2.3 million tonnes. Provincewide, fossil fuel savings of 22 petajoules

per year are expected if we meet most of our targets by 2010. Let me explain what 22 petajoules means in fossil fuels. It is equivalent to the natural gas consumed in 200,000 homes.

Provincewide, electricity savings of 3,400 gigawatt hours per year expected by 2010. This is equivalent to the electricity demand of 340,000 homes. The province's economy will benefit by net energy savings of 1.2 billion now and 2020 over and above the capital costs of more efficient buildings.

This program will also support B.C. Hydro's goal of meeting one-third of their growing energy demands through efficiency savings generated through their Power Smart program.

This brings me to our partners in energy efficiency. The strategy is a fine demonstration of government and industry working together in partnership to achieve common goals. Our partners include, among others, B.C. Hydro, Terasen Gas, Fortis BC, the Canadian Homebuilders Association, the Building Owners and Managers Association and the federal government. Through their new and existing energy efficiency programs and policies and their vision for energy efficiency we are confident that we can achieve our strategy by 2010.

With our partners the province will develop programs to increase consumer and industry awareness. This strategy outlines in detail ten different ways we will do this. Some of the are: energy efficiency training programs for both industry and consumers, energy performance certification, smart metering which is happening as we speak in a home in Kelowna, regional energy campaigns, community energy planning and incentives and PST exemptions for consumers.

All that involves a lot of consultation, a lot of work by government, by industry, by each and every one of us, through talking to our neighbours and accessing that information. We want to make it available to people so they can fit it into their own lives and their own homes, whether they're new or they're refurbishing an older home.

Today's strategy for energy efficient buildings is one more important step we are taking to ensure British Columbians enjoy the best possible quality of life. B.C. is a world leader in innovate alternative energy solutions, including energy efficiency. We're proud of that and we should continue to be proud of that, all British Columbians.

Through the vision and efforts of government, industry and the residents of British Columbia we can contribute to keeping our province the best place on earth to live, work and raise families.

Thank you very much.

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