



**NEWS RELEASE - For Immediate Release  
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**BC Throne Speech: Local Governments and Energy**

The Community Energy Association expects local governments and communities to be significant benefactors from the provincial government's focus on climate change. The issue was the main thrust of the British Columbia Lieutenant Governor throne speech February 13, 2007. The speech framed several energy-related initiatives and programs that will affect local governments and services they provide across British Columbia.

Throne speech priorities that may be of interest to local governments pursuing energy efficiency or greenhouse gas reductions include:

- **Urban sprawl:** Incentives to encourage smaller lot sizes and smaller, more energy efficient homes;
- **Building code:** A British Columbia Green Building Code;
- **Landfills:** Requirements for methane capture in municipal solid waste facilities;
- **Transportation:** New regional transit options;
- **Commitment to existing initiatives:** Towns For Tomorrow, LocalMotion Fund and Green Cities.

The intent to create incentives for local governments to reduce urban sprawl has significant potential. "Urban form is one of the most important ways that local governments can influence energy use," said Dan Rogers, Chair of the Community Energy Association. Rogers served twelve years as a Councillor for the City of Prince George, and is Past President / Life Member of the North Central Municipal Association.

The Community Energy Association is positioned to assist local governments in exploring new energy opportunities that may be supported by the throne speech. The Association is a collaboration of the Union of BC Municipalities, the Province of British Columbia, the Planning Institute of BC, transit authorities, energy utilities and other key partners.

The Association is a first-stop for BC local governments for energy efficiency and renewable energy planning and implementation. Services include:

- **Outreach** to local governments and professional bodies through presentations, workshops, and dialogue;
- **Publications** on community energy planning and implementation;
- **Best practice showcase** through the annual Energy Aware Award and case studies;
- **Provision of a focal point** for discussions about communities and energy in BC;
- **Advisory services** to local governments.

Attached is a backgrounder with additional information on the throne speech.

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**BACKGROUND:**

**Local Government Energy Highlights from the  
British Columbia 2007 Throne Speech**

**HIGHLIGHTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

- **Urban Sprawl:** Sprawl is recognized as putting pressure on a limited, productive land base and increasing servicing costs for property taxpayers (for new roads, bridges, and rapid transit; for sewage and water services; and for increased energy and transmission). Larger lots, larger homes, excessive fees, and longer time frames have pushed home prices beyond the economic reach of too many. Working with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the private sector the government will develop new incentives to encourage smaller lot sizes and smaller, more energy efficient homes that use less land, less energy, less water, and are less expensive to own.
- **Building Code:** A new, unified British Columbia Green Building Code will be developed over the next year with industry, professional, and community representatives. Incentives will be implemented to retrofit existing homes and buildings to make them more energy efficient.
- **Landfills:** Legislation will be developed over the next year to phase in new requirements for methane capture in municipal solid waste facilities.
- **Transportation:** Over the next year, new regional transit options will be established for major urban areas in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Capital Regional District and Okanagan.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** The \$21-million Towns For Tomorrow infrastructure program will help small towns across B.C. make improvements in their communities over the next three years.
- **Non-motorized Transit Alternatives:** A \$40-million LocalMotion Fund will help local governments build walkways, cycling paths, disability access, and other improvements aimed at getting people out of their cars and back on their feet.
- **Green Cities:** Foster innovations that reduce imprint on the planet through sustainable community planning. An element of this project will be the promotion of urban forestry and new community gardens. Green City Awards will recognize B.C.'s most environmentally friendly communities.

**ADDITIONAL ENERGY-RELATED MEASURES**

**Electricity**

- The new provincial Energy Plan (expected to be released March 2007) will require British Columbia to be electricity self-sufficient by 2016.
- A new personal conservation ethic will form the core of citizen actions in the years ahead. "Conservation provides huge benefits at minimal cost."

- All new and existing electricity produced in B.C. will be required to have net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2016.
- 100% carbon sequestration will be required for any coal-fired project.
- Real-time, in-home smart metering will be launched to help homeowners measure and reduce their energy consumption.

### **Transportation**

- New tailpipe emission standards for all new vehicles sold in B.C. will be phased in over the period 2009 to 2016. Those standards will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30% for automobiles.
- A low-carbon fuel standard will be established, reducing the carbon intensity of all passenger vehicles by at least 10% by 2020.
- \$89 million will be invested through a federal-provincial partnership for hydrogen fuelling stations and the world's first fleet of 20 fuel cell buses.

### **Investments**

- A \$25-million Innovative Clean Energy Fund will encourage alternative energy solutions and options for clean renewable energy.
- Additional investments will support tree planting and forests as carbon sinks.
- Green Institutional Infrastructure: "Green" universities, colleges, hospitals, schools, prisons, ferries, and airports will be promoted.

### **Engagement**

- Public education and information is critical to engagement on energy issues.
- Global warming will be included in school curricula for children.
- A Citizens' Conservation Council will be established and funded.

## **CONTEXT**

**Provincial Greenhouse Gas Targets:** The BC Provincial Government firmly established climate change and energy as priorities. The Throne Speech announced that actions to reduce B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below current levels by 2020 were being initiated, to place British Columbia's greenhouse gas emissions at 10 per cent under 1990 levels by 2020. A Climate Action Team will be established by the government to work with First Nations, other governments, industries, environmental organizations, and the scientific community to determine the most credible, aggressive, and economically viable sector targets possible for 2012 and 2016.

**Provincial Government Operations:** The Province will consider options to make provincial government operations carbon neutral by 2010, e.g. all new cars leased or purchased by the provincial government will be hybrid vehicles.

**The Challenge:** Highlighting the magnitude of the challenge, the Lieutenant Governor emphasized, "Little has been done to seriously address this problem, which is literally threatening life on Earth as we know it. ... If we fail to act aggressively and shoulder our responsibility, we know what our children can expect ... . Our wildlife, plant life, and ocean life will all be hurt in ways we cannot know and dare not imagine."