



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Canadian Renewable Energy Alliance Calls on Canada to “Catch up” at International Renewable Energy Conference

Ottawa, Feb 28, 2008 — Next week ministers from around the globe will meet in Washington to discuss ways of scaling up renewable energy. At the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) — the largest renewable energy conference ever held — each country will be asked to make major new policy commitments that will support new investment in renewable energy technology.

The Canadian Renewable Energy Alliance (CanREA) is calling on Canada to step up to the plate and announce new or strengthened renewable energy policies at the conference.

The combination of renewable energy with significant improvements in energy efficiency is the leading option to address global warming. A transition to renewable energy will also bring improvements in air and water quality, energy security, access to energy and economic development.

“Despite having more renewable energy resources than most other countries, Canada is lagging behind the rest of the world on its use,” says Roger Peters, a senior advisor for the Pembina Institute.

“While Canada provides some federal support for wind power development, and provinces like Ontario have innovative renewable energy support programs, these efforts are small and intermittent compared with other countries,” added Peters.

Canada stands behind the United States, many European countries, China and India in both investment attractiveness and rate of deployment. “These countries want to ensure they have a mature, safe and competitive renewable energy industry in place for the inevitable transition to renewable energy,” says Peters.

In 2006 CanREA developed a national renewable energy strategy. It has since been joined in that call by the renewable energy industry, but Canada has taken no action yet.

“Canada has a chance to catch up with the rest of the world by making concrete commitments at WIREC. The government of Canada should support provincial governments like Ontario that implement innovative policies, such as feed-in tariffs, through the passage of a Canadian renewable energy act as a concrete step to advance the deployment of renewable energy,” says Jose Etcheverry, representing the David Suzuki Foundation.

CanREA calls for the Canadian government to immediately adopt nine renewable energy policies:

1. By 2009 establish national targets for renewable energy and develop a national renewable energy strategy, including a renewable energy act.
2. Scale up current incentive programs for renewable power by three fold over the next five years.
3. Introduce a national tax credit for residential and small business solar water heaters.
4. Provide support for community power generation.
5. Support renewable energy deployment in the North.
6. Support sustainable, renewable biomass heating fuels.
7. Develop sustainability criteria for renewable agricultural and bio-fuels.
8. Establish a high-level national task force on renewable power grid integration, power storage and transmission.
9. Participate actively in and provide funding for international partnerships.

“Taking these steps will put Canada back among the leaders on renewable energy and encourage provincial governments to adopt stronger policies,” says Gwen Glover, Executive Director of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association.

-30-

Members of CanREA will be attending the WIREC conference and are available for more information prior to and during the conference.

A media background paper detailing the nine recommended policies and programs and giving examples of how Canada lags behind other countries on renewable energy can be downloaded from <http://www.canrea.ca> .

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The Canadian Renewable Energy Alliance (CanREA) is an alliance of Canadian civil society organizations from the non-profit or voluntary sector that hold a common interest in promoting a global transition to energy conservation and efficiency and low-impact renewable energy. For membership and more information see <http://www.canrea.ca>.