

Ontario takes historic step toward energy future says Ontario Sustainable Energy Association

(Toronto, March 21, 2006) Today's announcement of a new policy for renewable power projects up to 10 MW by Premier Dalton McGuinty and Ontario Minister of Energy Donna Cansfield is an historic step towards a sustainable energy future says the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA), an Ontario community-based renewable energy group.

"This is a bold step that puts Ontario at the forefront of renewable energy development in North America," says Melinda Zytaruk, General Manager of OSEA. "No other jurisdiction in North America has crafted such a striking policy that allows everyone to participate in affecting a sustainable energy economy in Ontario. SOCs allow homeowners, landowners, farmers, co-operatives, schools, First Nations, municipalities and others to install renewable energy projects up to 10 MW in size and sell the power to the grid for a fixed price for 20 years."

OSEA has been instrumental in putting the Standard Offer concept on the political agenda in Ontario. They launched a campaign in early 2004 to adapt the European policy to Ontario so OSEA's members could form cooperatives to install wind turbines, solar panels, biogas digesters and small hydro projects. In Denmark and Germany, farmers and cooperatives have been the driving force behind renewable energy. According to OSEA, hundreds of thousands of Germans and Danes own shares of or operate their own wind turbines, biomass plants, and solar systems.

"This type of broad local ownership structure is what we at OSEA call Community Power," says Deborah Doncaster, Executive Director of OSEA. "A very important aspect of Community Power is that it is locally owned and developed. Community Power has been shown to bring 5 times the jobs and investments to a local community than projects owned by outside companies"

"This policy proves that Ontario's Liberal Government understands the importance of renewables to our electricity grid and to our communities. OSEA has every confidence that this government will continue to govern the electricity sector in a responsible and responsive manor," says Brent Kopperson, Chair of OSEA's Board of Directors.

"Throughout the development of this program, Minister Cansfield has insisted that this policy lead to action, that it result in real benefits to Ontario, and that it stimulate a dynamic market for renewable energy technology in the province. She has delivered," says Paul Gipe, OSEA's Policy Advisor and a renowned international authority on wind power.

"This is no hollow announcement. It's a real program with a mechanism that has worked elsewhere. Everyone in our organization is anxious to get started."

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