

2008 World Wind Energy Conference concludes on a positive note

Kingston Conference signals new era in community power and looks to Ontario for leadership

Kingston, Ontario, June 26, 2008 – The 2008 World Wind Energy Conference wrapped up yesterday and the overwhelming mood of the 800 conference attendees pointed toward the fact that Ontario should act quickly to institute a Green Energy Act as part of its energy policy.

Kristopher Stevens, Executive Director of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) says the 3 day Conference was a great success and provided opportunities for international leaders to share their experiences and ideas.

“I’m delighted with the response we’ve seen here these past couple days. There’s been a real sense of enthusiasm and motivation among attendees and panel speakers that I hope ends up extending beyond this conference and into the communities, workplaces and levels of government here in Ontario.”

On Tuesday, during an appearance as Ontario’s new Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Renewal, George Smitherman made his first public address at the Conference. The Minister said he was open to hearing more about a Green Energy Act, but required more information from interested groups on what they wanted to include in any proposed act.

The Energy Minister’s speech was praised by delegates for showing openness to studying legislation and processes from around the world, particularly in Germany, a country producing 40% of its energy from renewable sources.

“We’re encouraged by the Minister’s willingness to explore how the Ontario government can reach our renewable energy targets,” stated Jose Etcheverry of the David Suzuki Foundation. “More importantly, we’re pleased to hear that there’s interest in hearing from stakeholders in Ontario and abroad on how to expand renewable energy sources.”

Dr. Hermann Scheer, architect of Germany's Renewable Sources Act's response addressed the Conference this week and focused on Canada’s immense renewable energy potential.

"Because of existing Hydro potential it’s possible that within 5 years Canada could meet its electricity needs with a 100% renewable system by a complimentary mix of hydro and wind,” Scheer advised the audience. “The economic and technical capacity exists; you just need the political will and policy framework! You could do this faster than the construction of any nuclear power plant and create far greater benefits!" he added.

At the beginning of the Conference OSEA released a poll that indicated 93% of Ontarians support the creation of a Green Energy Act that would set firm targets for increased renewable energy production in Ontario, including 62% who strongly support the creation of such an act.

“OSEA’s Green Energy Act polling proves what we’ve always known: Ontarians are hungry for green energy and through this conference, we’ve been shown renewables are doable”, said Mr. Stevens.

Over 40 countries were represented with over 800 attendees and appearances were made by 4 provincial Minister’s as well as Ministers from Germany and India.

“The Conference was one of the most diverse and high profile ones over the past seven years,” said Stefan Gsaenger, Secretary General of the World Wind Association. “Renewable energy is the world’s greatest industry opportunity and the success of Ontario’s conference as measured by its international representation proves the world is ready for a huge economic and renewable takeoff.”

The Conference passed a number of resolutions establishing commitments to renewable energy, including developing, using and expanding appropriate national, regional and international financing mechanisms for the exclusive realization of renewable energy. These include funds that are supporting community power investment such as a Community Power Fund here in Ontario.

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