

Media Release

Green Energy Act the Solution to Environmental and Economic Crisis is theme of Renfrew County Meeting

(Cobden ON., Feb 11, 2009)- Citizens from Renfrew County and surrounding areas attended a meeting at the Whitewater Region Memorial Township Hall last night (Feb. 10) organized by the Ottawa River Institute and the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA). The presentation was a preview of what these organizations anticipated seeing in the Green Energy Act, which Premier Dalton McGuinty announced on February 3, will be tabled later in the month.

The theme of the evening was quickly established by the opening comments, "A Green Energy Act will bring economic prosperity and new 'green' jobs to Ontario, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and allow individuals, communities and companies to become energy producers and conservers," made by Kristopher Stevens, Executive Director of OSEA, a founding member of the Green Energy Act Alliance (GEAA).

Around 100 people from Renfrew County attended the meeting at the Whitewater Region Memorial Township Hall, including several mayors and municipal leaders. Attendees were very receptive of renewable energy as well as the Green Energy Act.

Renewable energy is the solution to both climate change and the economic crisis but to get enough windmills erected, solar panels installed and biodigesters operating, legislation is needed to make renewable energy a provincial priority.

Stevens went on to say, "The fundamental components we expect to see in Ontario's Green Energy Act flow from similar legislation adopted in Germany. That country is now a world leader able to produce 20,000 MW of new green power, developed in less time than it would take to build a 1,000 MW nuclear plant. Germany is also able to meet tough climate change targets by avoiding the emission of 100 million tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere a year, while a quarter of a million new green collar jobs have been created, all for just an extra \$5 a month per household.

The GEAA is recommending guaranteed access to the electricity grid for all producers of sustainable energy, priority purchase of green electricity before coal and nuclear power, fair prices, fixed over the long term for renewables and a strong commitment to continually improve conservation and efficiency.

Across Ontario farmers, First Nations and communities are eager to contribute to the province's electricity supply by producing clean, renewable energy. However, they are being hindered by outdated regulations that slow the adoption of renewable energy technology, a lack of access to the grid to sell their energy and opposition from lobbyists for the coal and nuclear power industry.

Ken Birkett, President of the Ottawa River Institute based in Griffith, closed the meeting by thanking the participants and reminding them that, "We have before us a very exciting opportunity. We can choose to live in a healthy way on this beautiful planet by embracing meaningful energy saving measures and by developing locally or community owned electrical generation capacity."

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For more information, contact:

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A schedule of all the GEAA workshops in this provincial series can be found at http://www.greenenergyact.ca/Storage/23/1476_Handout_v2_revised.pdf

OSEA works to initiate, facilitate and support the work of local sustainable energy organizations through membership services, province wide capacity building and non-partisan policy work. They work to catalyze the efforts of community organizers and raise awareness of the benefits of community power and renewable energy through various communication channels and by offering a variety of workshops and guidebooks on topics.

The Ottawa River Institute (ORI) fosters sustainable communities and ecological integrity in the Ottawa River Watershed.