

Media Release

Green Energy Act the Solution to Environmental and Economic Crises is theme of Sarnia Meeting

(Sarnia ON., Feb 18, 2009)- Citizens from Sarnia and surrounding areas attended a workshop at Lambton College last night (February 17), organized by Lambton College 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 Khlaire Parré, Outreach Coordinator of OSEA, a founding member of the Green Energy Act Alliance (GEAA).

Around 75 people from the Sarnia community attended the meeting, where energy expert Marion Fraser presented recommendations made by the Green Energy Act Alliance for a Green Energy Act. Attendees were receptive to the recommendations and many were interested in the types of jobs that would be created by the proposed legislation.

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.

Parré went on to say, “The fundamental provision 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.

“We all want to ensure a healthy and productive life for ourselves, our children and future generations. Taking responsibility today for the many ways we produce and use energy is necessary to achieve this goal, a Green Energy Act will enable us to do that,” said Maïke Luiken, Dean of Sustainable Development of Lambton College.

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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

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Lambton College has proudly served the Sarnia Lambton region for over 40 years as a recognized Ontario Community College of Applied Arts and Technology. The College offers relevant, quality programs at the certificate, diploma and advanced diploma levels that balance career-specific and essential employability skills. Lambton College is committed to sustainable development as demonstrated through its organizational practices, curriculum and community involvement.

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.