



Interview Opportunity

ecoENERGY shutdown is killing Ontario jobs

(Ontario, December 13, 2010) “Home energy efficiency retrofits is a billion dollar industry in Ontario and we’re about to lose it,” warned Clifford Maynes, Executive Director of Green Communities Canada.

Government incentives for home energy efficiency investments are slated to end in March 2011, and so far neither Ottawa nor Queen’s Park have announced plans to keep the industry alive beyond the expiry of current programs.

The impending shutdown includes the federal ecoENERGY Retrofit-Homes program, which stopped accepting new entrants last March, and the Ontario Home Energy Savings Program, which matches federal incentives.

“Energy efficiency is the most effective way to create green jobs and business opportunities. Increasing energy productivity should be the cornerstone of Ontario’s green economy,” Maynes said. “Residential energy efficiency saves more than it costs. It makes us richer and greener!”

Green Communities Canada is calling on the federal and provincial governments to renew their commitment to an energy efficient future.

“We need a comprehensive home energy strategy that includes ambitious targets, smart incentives, home energy labelling, loans, standards and community-wide retrofit programs – everything it takes to bring our housing stock into the 21st century,” Maynes said.

“At a time when we should be ramping up – like the U.S. and the U.K. - we are losing jobs and businesses in every community, including energy contractors and advisors,” Maynes said. “And we are losing the skilled workforce needed to meet targets for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reductions.”

Lay-offs have already begun. Ontario organizations that deliver professional energy assessments report workforce shrinkage of up to 60 per cent as incentives are phased out and skilled workers seek employment elsewhere.

Small businesses are especially hard hit: Ontario eco-Energy Advisors of Oakville has terminated five of its eight employees; ACAN Energy Solutions of Port Perry has reduced its full-time complement of twenty to four full-time and ten part-time; EnerTest Corporation of Orillia, which generated full-time work for 38 staff and associates, has dropped to four full-time and five part-time.

“This is very bad news for Ontario - and it makes no sense,” Maynes said. “In today’s economy, home energy efficiency is a perfect way to stimulate job creation and create benefits for all Ontarians. This is a time to push forward, not retreat.”

Additional benefits of home energy efficiency include:

- bill savings for homeowners
- greenhouse gas reductions
- increased home comfort and value

Ontario’s Environmental Commissioner recently called on Ontario to continue retrofit incentives and implement energy labelling of new and existing homes at time of sale.

To schedule interviews, contact Dave McLeod, 705-745-7479, ext. 151, dmcLeod@greencommunitiescanada.org. Local contacts available.