



CITIZEN DIALOGUES ON CANADA'S ENERGY FUTURE

Atlantic Canada Regional Dialogue Report

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Moving Canada Forward 



**Atlantic Canada
Regional Dialogue Report
Halifax, NS
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Purpose of document

This report was independently prepared by Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and funded under a contribution agreement from Natural Resources Canada. This publication does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Simon Fraser University, Natural Resources Canada or the author.

The purpose of this document is to provide regional dialogue participants with a summary of the key outcomes and recommendations that emerged at their workshop. A separate report for decision-makers, stakeholders and members of the public will be released in October 2017 to compare the results of all regional dialogues, including the information contained in this report.

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About the Citizen Dialogues on Canada's Energy Future

The Citizen Dialogues on Canada's Energy Future are an attempt to approach conversations about energy differently, and they are the first ever cross-Canada deliberative dialogue process where randomly selected citizens advise the federal government on energy policy.

Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue was selected by Natural Resources Canada to independently design and implement five regional dialogues as part of the Generation Energy public consultation, including Vancouver (British Columbia and Yukon), Calgary (Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan), Toronto (Nunavut and Ontario), Montreal (Québec) and Halifax (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). A further pan-Canadian dialogue is taking place in Winnipeg.

During September and October 2017, these dialogues are engaging 145 Canadians in a deep conversation on energy. Coming from different hometowns, perspectives and backgrounds, these randomly selected participants are sitting down at the same table to learn about each other's lives, ideas and aspirations.

These events are intended to produce high-quality citizen input into how Canada can balance energy issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, jobs and international competitiveness. Together, participants are seeking a shared path forward in shaping Canada's energy future, informed by the best evidence-based information available and the spirit of curiosity.

Outcomes from the Atlantic Canada Regional Dialogue

On September 24-25, 2017, 28 citizens from Nova-Scotia, New-Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador gathered in Halifax for the fifth Regional Dialogue on Canada's Energy Future. The format included both large group plenary discussions and focused working sessions within four parallel breakout groups. Over the two days, participants:

- Explored how energy impacts their lives and the lives of other Canadians.
- Reviewed evidence-based information about Canada's energy profile and explored diverse perspectives about potential approaches to Canada's energy future.
- Developed potential visions for Canada's energy future and voted upon criteria to guide the development of group recommendations.
- Worked in small groups to recommend three key actions to create an energy future that is in the best interest of Canada as a whole.

This dialogue report provides a summary of key outcomes from the regional dialogue, including key messages that summarize the narrative that emerged over the two-day workshop, a list of decision criteria selected by participants and the recommended actions developed by participants in small groups.

Key messages

At the end of two intense days of deliberation and dialogue, the facilitation team noted down a series of messages that summarized the qualitative narrative that emerged over the course of the workshop. These key messages were reviewed and confirmed with participants in plenary discussion to ensure that they accurately portray participants' beliefs.

Participants:

- Emphasized that incentives are important to foster change.
- Stressed that individual responsibility and action is necessary to move forward. This requires education and feedback loops.
- Expressed that cost and affordability are important and must be maintained through the balance of actions.
- Wanted accountability and transparency so citizens know their tax dollars are spent effectively and achieving objectives towards a green energy future.
- Wanted any penalties for pollution to be tied to green spending programs or to the transition to a low-carbon energy future.

- Stressed the need to better mobilize current and existing technologies and develop new innovations to make the clean energy economy possible and affordable.
- Expressed that we need to start now on measured actions to transition to a cleaner energy future.
- Wanted energy self-sufficiency for Canada and its communities.
- Felt that Atlantic Canada can be a regional leader as part of a wider Canadian collaboration.
- Emphasized that we need pan-Canadian collaboration and leadership involving all levels of government and stakeholders and citizens in a way that leaves behind partisanship and creates long terms continuity and results over elections.
- Wanted citizens' voices to be a guiding force in setting Canada's energy future.

Criteria

Participants were asked to suggest criteria that should guide their breakout group when developing recommendations for Canada's energy future. The themes that emerged from this activity were confirmed with participants through plenary discussion. Next, the lead facilitator presented participants with a list of four criteria that had been pre-identified by Natural Resources Canada. These were: (1) Jobs; (2) International competitiveness; (3) Greenhouse gas reductions; and (4) Innovation.

These two lists of potential criteria were then combined so that participants could vote on the criteria they believed to be most important. Participants received three votes each, with the understanding that the top 3-5 criteria would be used to guide the development of their group recommendations.

The voting results were:

- 1. Cost and Affordability (20 votes)**
- 2. Clean environment and GHG emissions reduction (14 votes)**
- 3. Jobs (12 votes)**
4. Effectiveness, practicality and feasibility (9 votes)
International competitiveness (7 votes)
Innovation (7 votes)
5. Health (6 votes)
6. National strength and collaboration (4 votes)
7. Safety (3 votes)

Top group recommendations

Each breakout group was tasked to create recommendations for Canada's energy future that are in the best interest of Canada as a whole. The timeframe for these recommendations was the year 2050, a full generation into the future. Within their recommendations, each group was asked to propose:

- Three key actions.
- The actor responsible for carrying out each action.
- An explanation of how the recommended actions meet the top decision criteria.
- What costs or impacts the group was willing to accept and why.

Each breakout group presented its recommendations in plenary with the proposed actions posted on the wall. All 28 participants were then asked to vote for their top three favourites from the combined list of actions.

1. 12 votes – Create a National Energy Commission, controlled federally, that will be responsible for building a cost-effective national energy grid to:

- a. promote self-sufficiency across the country.
- b. be responsible for effective research and development of energy.
- c. identify the needs and assets of different provinces/territories.
- d. help connect northern communities where and when feasible and be responsible for providing reliable power to remote and isolated communities.

12 votes - Funding innovation in clean energy throughout the education system and encouraging reduction of energy loss/waste.

- a. Centres for excellence across the country. New "Silicon Valleys" focused on clean energy.
- b. Funnel grants into research on clean energy.
- c. New curriculums in schools to encourage kids to orient themselves in these new fields, including a new energy degree at the postsecondary level.
- d. NRCan funds in conjunction with province and territories bursaries/grants/scholarships for research in clean energy.
- e. Research on all new forms of clean energy (hemp included).
- f. Lower tuitions for colleges/universities.
- g. Encourage technology for reducing energy loss/waste and carbon capture and storage/utilization.

2. 10 votes – Immediate and ongoing incentives for consumers and industry to adopt clean energy, including tax credits and subsidies

- a. Energy audits on present buildings.
- b. Building retrofitting for energy efficiency.
- c. Solar rooftops.

- d. Electric/hybrid cars.
 - e. Heat pumps to replace furnaces.
 - f. Ability to sell power back to the grid (negative power bills).
 - g. Community gardens (paid for by pollution offenders).
- 3. 7 votes – Better utilization and development of current infrastructure and investment in required new infrastructure**
- a. Assess current energy infrastructure.
 - b. Infrastructure renewal and maximization of utilization of current infrastructure.
 - c. Assess future energy needs through a GAP analysis.
- 7 votes – Green trade**
- a. Reduce tariffs on goods and services imported from countries reducing GHG emissions.
 - b. Increase tariffs on goods and services imported from countries NOT reducing GHG emissions.
- 7 votes – Education**
- a. Educate citizens about the economy and the environment so they understand potential solutions, present day impacts and consequences of inaction.
 - b. Build in feedback loops: citizens must understand the impacts of their personal actions and inactions.

Full list of breakout group recommendations

The full list of recommendations developed by all four breakout groups are summarized below.

Group 1

Name of recommendation: Canada's foundation for a clean and innovative future

Recommended Action #1 – Better utilization and development of current infrastructure and investment in required new infrastructure

- Assess current energy infrastructure.
- Infrastructure renewal and maximization of utilization of current infrastructure.
- Assess future energy needs through a GAP analysis. What is delta between what we have today and what we will need/want for tomorrow?

Responsible for action: Federal government in conjunction with regional departments of energy. This would be a publicly funded initiative.

Recommended Action #2 – Foster research and development in clean energies for production and use

- Develop a new funding model with 3 levels:
 - Government (federal and provincial/territorial)
 - Private (industry)
 - Individual

Those who can fund, fund it (not the average Joe). Those who want to participate can invest in a fund and get a tax break for it. Royalties from extraction could be used in this model.

- By fostering creativity, new technology will emerge but affordability will also be maintained.

Responsible for action: Government, industry and individuals.

Recommended Action #3 – Increase trade export of energy both inter-provincially and internationally to help fund the transition

- Maximize current assets.
- Utilize updated infrastructure.
- Negotiate or revise current and new trade agreements both inter-provincially and internationally.
- Increased production = increased competitiveness.
- Innovation = capacity to set the price.
- Stimulate foreign investment but cap it if there is any fear of international corporations taking control over our assets.

Notes:

It is easier to export fossil fuels than green energies
Should we focus on the U.S.A. or all trading partners?

Group 2**Name of recommendation: Green footprint to 2050 - "Follow our tracks"****Recommended Action #1 – Incentives for individuals to adopt low- GHG technology**

- Allow people to trade their volunteer time for money. Tax breaks that can be used to reduce their GHG emissions (like honorariums for firefighters).
- A tax on plastic.
- Reduction of property taxes for recycling, green roofs, solar panels, etc.
- GST rebate for receipts for products that are "green", have low GHG emissions or a long life span.

Responsible for action: Federal and local governments as well as communities

Recommended Action #2 – Improve and implement technology

- Attach timelines and accountability to research grants.
- Identify technologies that are working in other places:
 - Other northern countries
 - Remote communities
 - Rural areas
 - Urban areas
- Use potential of changing climate:
 - Stronger tides
 - Fresh water from icebergs
 - Longer growing seasons

Responsible for action: Federal government, Corporations and Industry, Citizenry

Recommended Action #3 – Green trade

- Reduce tariffs on goods and services imported from countries reducing GHG emissions.
- Increase tariffs on goods and services imported from countries NOT reducing GHG emissions.

Responsible for action: Federal government and consumers

Acceptable costs/impacts:

- We may be paying more in consumer goods and services but it would create an opportunity for Canadian manufacturers to rebound and create jobs.

Group 3**Name of recommendation: Power forward****Recommended Action #2 – Stakeholders gather to develop a national energy strategy**

- The objectives of the national energy strategy will be:
 - GHG emissions reductions to keep our international obligations
 - A clean and healthy natural environment
 - Innovation
 - International competitiveness
 - Cost and affordability
 - Jobs
 - Effectiveness
- The steps for the national energy strategy:
 1. Identify scope and impacts.
 2. Inject information into process.
 3. Third party convener brings together all affected groups (federal government, Provinces and Territories, Indigenous Peoples, Citizens...) especially those who have been ignored (e.g. Indigenous groups).
 4. This will be an iterative process that communicates potential impacts to communities and adapts based on the input received.
 5. Everyone must compromise. Action is needed!

Recommended Action #2 – Education

- Educate citizens about the economy and the environment so they understand potential solutions, present day impacts and consequences of inaction.
 - Educate through a public school curriculum reform.
 - Educate through mainstream media public awareness campaigns (Facebook ads, television, radio and informative in-depth web sites).
- Build in feedback loops: citizens must understand the impacts of their personal actions and inactions
 - Send every household a personalized letter describing their personal impacts and regional circumstances.
 - Promote awareness of footprint calculators and cost savings.
 - Communicate potential impacts for personal actions (e.g. composting, solar panels on roofs, etc.).

Recommended Action #3 – Immediate and ongoing incentives for consumers and industry to adopt clean energy, including tax credits and subsidies.

- Energy audits on present buildings
- Building retrofitting for energy efficiency
- Solar rooftops
- Electric/hybrid cars

- Heat pumps to replace furnaces
- Ability to sell power back to the grid (negative power bills)
- Community gardens (paid for by pollution offenders)

Responsible for action: The government provides incentives to individuals, communities and corporations.

Group 4

Recommended Action #1 – Create a National Energy Commission, controlled federally, that will be responsible for building a cost-effective national energy grid. (12 votes) This National Energy Commission would:

- promote self-sufficiency across the country
- be responsible for effective research and development of energy
- identify the needs and assets of different provinces/territories
- help connect northern communities where and when feasible and be responsible for providing reliable power to remote and isolated communities

Responsible for action: Federal Government would be responsible for implementing this action in collaboration with provinces and territories

Recommended Action #2 – Funding innovation in clean energy throughout the education system and encouraging reduction of energy loss/waste. Schools and higher learning heading into the future (12 votes)

- Centres for excellence across the country. New “Silicon Valleys” focused on clean energy.
- Funnel grants into research on clean energy.
- New curriculums in schools to encourage kids to orient themselves in these new fields, including a new energy degree at the post-secondary level.
- NRCan funds in conjunction with provinces and territories bursaries/grants/scholarships for research in clean energy.
- Research on all new forms of clean energy (hemp included).
- Lower tuitions for colleges/universities.
- Encourage technology for reducing energy loss/waste and carbon capture and storage/utilization.

Responsible for action: Federal Government would be responsible for setting guidelines and provinces/territories would implement in collaboration with all education institutions

Recommended Action #3: Implement a federal GHG transition tax (federal) on gas and diesel. Additional tax on luxury vehicles and RVs at the point of sale. Cap provincial gas tax. (5 votes)

- Fishermen and farmers exempted as they are essential food providers.
- Revenue from tax will be used in part to protect vulnerable populations (through mechanism similar to GST Rebate) and to incentivize energy-efficient vehicles.
- This tax will have to be managed in a transparent, efficient and wise way. Government has to be held accountable.

Responsible for action: Federal Government would be responsible in collaboration with Provinces and Territories.

Group 4 Minority Report (4 votes)

A minority report is a separate report presented by a member(s) of the group who disagrees with the majority.

Recommended Action: No additional tax on individuals or businesses. Government will find ways to save money on current revenue and be more efficient in its spending.

Summary of votes by recommended action:¹

Group #	Recommended action 1	Recommended action 2	Recommended action 3
1	7 votes	4 votes	6 votes
2	2 votes	2 votes	7 votes
3	3 votes	7 votes	10 votes
4	12 votes	12 votes	5 votes
Minority report	4 votes	n/a	n/a

¹ Note: In this updated version of the report, we have included the number of votes received by each action in a summary table rather than in the list above. The purpose of the list is not to evaluate the popularity of individual actions, but rather provide an account of the full list of – sometimes overlapping – ideas developed by participants. The voting exercise was used to identify areas of overall interest, which is reflected in the list of most popular actions on p. 5-6.

What happens next?

A separate report for decision-makers, stakeholders and members of the public will be released in October 2017 to compare the results of all regional dialogues, including the information contained in this report. A subset of participants from each Regional Dialogue will attend a pan-Canadian citizen dialogue, which will take place in Winnipeg October 11-13, 2017 in parallel to Natural Resources Canada's Generation Energy Forum. The purpose of this dialogue will be to draw upon the recommendations from the regional dialogues to create a final set of recommendations that are in the best interest of Canada as a whole. Participants in Winnipeg will have the opportunity to present their ideas to stakeholders and decision-makers.