



Natural Resources Canada

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Renewal of funding for the Clean Air Agenda

Description

Through Budget 2011, the Government is advancing Canadian leadership in the development and promotion of clean energy technologies with renewed funding for the Clean Air Agenda. With an increased focus on regulatory actions as the cornerstone of Canada's approach to climate change and clean air, this funding will achieve real emissions reductions, while maintaining Canada's economic advantage and creating jobs for Canadians. The implementation of the next-generation of clean energy programs, and investments in a cleaner energy economy, will benefit all Canadians. The programs will be delivered by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The program areas are:

- **ecoENERGY Retrofit - Homes**
 - Provides a grant to homeowners of up to \$5,000 to make their homes more energy efficient and reduce the burden of high energy costs.
- **Clean energy regulatory actions with a focus on energy efficiency**
 - Through measures such as the ecoENERGY Efficiency initiatives, additional standards, regulations and other cost-effective measures will be implemented to help Canadians use energy more efficiently. New labeling, benchmarking, training and information sharing tools will help Canada improve energy performance in all sectors of the economy.
- **Research, development and demonstrations of clean energy and energy efficiency**
 - Through the ecoENERGY Innovation Initiative, a comprehensive suite of research and development and demonstration projects will be funded. The objective is to support energy technology innovation to produce and use energy in a more clean and efficient way. Selected projects will focus on five key areas: energy efficiency in buildings, communities, industry and transportation; clean electricity and renewables; bioenergy; electric vehicles; and unconventional oil and gas.
- **Deployment of clean energy technologies in Aboriginal and Northern communities**

- Through the renewed ecoENERGY for Aboriginal and Northern Communities program, funding will be provided to Aboriginal and Northern off-grid communities to help them develop clean energy projects in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Summary of SEA Results

In accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*, a Detailed Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was conducted for this proposal.

The Detailed SEA indicated that cumulatively, the clean energy initiatives are likely to result in important net positive environmental effects in the medium to long-term. Potential residual negative environmental effects will be minimized through project selection criteria, planning and operating practices, and the implementation of mitigation measures.

Projects arising from this proposal will be assessed as per the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and other applicable legislation, as appropriate, prior to decisions being made.

Environmental Effects

Clean energy initiatives are likely to result in important net positive environmental effects in the medium to long-term, especially with regard to reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. It is also anticipated that there will be co-benefits of cleaner air, water or other environmental considerations. Environmental performance will be improved by advancing clean electricity and cleaner fossil fuels; increasing the use of alternative fuels, and improving end-use energy efficiencies. These improvements were a key factor in decision-making. Environmental benefits from the initiatives are spread across all regions of the country, including Canada's north.

Potential negative environmental impacts are primarily project- and site-specific and will vary depending on the initiative. Project selection criteria will be oriented to screen-out proposals which would have negative implications for the environment.

Enhancement, Mitigation and Follow-up Measures

Opportunities to enhance environmental benefits expected from the suite of clean energy programs may be provided by:

1. leveraging and collaborating with provincial/territorial and international jurisdictions and industry to maximize benefits and synergies;
2. sharing results and lessons learned, and
3. communicating benefits of clean energy technologies to the public. Federal measures will have greater environmental impacts depending on the level of actions from other jurisdictions, such as provinces, municipalities and industry.

Projects funded under the various clean energy initiatives are required to comply with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and other applicable legislation.

Federally, the environment is protected through several pieces of legislation, including the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, the *Species at Risk Act*, the *Fisheries Act* and the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*. Provincially and territorially, there is also environmental protection legislation and regulations associated with air quality/emissions, water quality and wastewater disposal, and habitat protection. Proponents will be required to obtain necessary permits and approvals prior to construction and operation. These controls help to mitigate any significant adverse impacts arising from the proposed projects. In addition, monitoring and reporting mechanisms are used where possible depending on the nature of the actions being taken.

Results of Consultations

Stakeholders were actively engaged for a period of more than a year on issues related to clean energy, and the options going forward. Both formal and informal consultations were held during the development of these programs. This included several National Energy Roundtable meetings with senior officials from all levels of government, along with industry, environmental, academic and public policy organizations.

Federal officials will follow the “Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation – Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult” to fulfill the legal duty to consult in order to provide opportunities for Aboriginal groups to be meaningfully involved in the environmental assessment process and other planning processes, where there is a potentially adverse impact on asserted Aboriginal rights and title.

Other opportunities for public participation may arise through the environmental assessment process, as required.

Linkage to Sustainable Development

The suite of clean energy actions will support a number of goals and targets in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS). In particular, this includes goals and targets under Theme I: Addressing Climate Change and Air Quality, and to a lesser extent, Theme II: Maintaining Water Quality and Availability, and Theme III: Protecting Nature.

Relevant Links

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