

ALBERTA RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE

OPEN LETTER TO PREMIER JIM PRENTICE

December 19, 2014

Re: Alberta's Leadership for a Sustainable Energy Future

Dear Premier Prentice,

Our Alberta Renewable Energy Alliance (AREA) is a grassroots organization based in Calgary and initiated in July 2004 by students at the University of Calgary who were fascinated with an emerging energy sector – renewable energy. AREA envisions an Alberta that leads the energy industry into the future by fully developing Alberta's abundant clean, and currently untapped renewable and ecologically sound sources of energy.

AREA is asking the Alberta government to support a proposal to install 20,000 solar power systems by 2020 (see details on next page).

We promote the deployment of renewable energy through educational events, political advocacy, and financial support for installations. AREA seeks to diversify, expand, and future-proof Alberta's economy in these chaotic times of hydrocarbon peaks and valleys by:

- integrating sustainable, renewable energy with hydrocarbon energy;
- promoting thousands of local diversified jobs;
- leading development of new technologies;
- reducing health care costs and GHGs associated with burning fossil fuels; and,
- improving Alberta's image on the world stage by being a leader in all forms of energy, including clean, renewable energy technologies;

... rather than being buffeted by boom and bust oil prices, foreign manipulation, effects of hydrocarbon mining, pollution and health impacts, and worst of all, swapping our reputation as an energy leader for environmental laggard.

As an example of our commitment - in September this year, our members helped research, fund, source, and expedite the installation of our first residential solar photovoltaic system to provide electricity for our first 'willing host' homeowner. We want to promote and spread this Alberta "can do" attitude and continue the proud legacy we've created in being visionaries in the energy industry.

We are buoyed by indications from your government that coal power will be curtailed by 2030, and wholeheartedly support that goal. We've been encouraged to hear of your Government's willingness to deeply re-evaluate the SGER regulation, even to the point of calling for a consistent, fair, and broad-based carbon tax across Canada and North America. Ideally, levies would be increased progressively (annually) in applying a carbon price on GHG emissions, one that truly reflects their disrupting impact to the global environment. (see Note *)

But we want more than just to restrict – we want to help “create”, to “expand”, and to “lead” Alberta in this new century as an energy powerhouse with a strong, resilient, proud legacy to share with our children’s children. We want to look back at our province and be able to tell our grandkids that we did the rational thing, the economic thing, and the “right thing” by diversifying when we had the time and opportunity to do so.

We believe we have come up with a plan to help get us there with almost no risk and almost limitless upside - Our ‘20,000 by 2020’ plan: For only a fraction of the subsidy that is regularly provided to the current energy industry, we can foster a new burgeoning \$200 million solar industry, speaking conservatively (see Note **) by offering a simple \$1/watt subsidy to interested home and business owners who install PV systems on their buildings; and we think 20,000 homes and businesses are a gross underestimate of what is possible in our renowned sunny province.

An Alberta Solar Programme (including large scale solar farms) would send a significant international signal that Alberta wishes to progress to a more sustainable energy future. We would like you to help support this initiative in the coming months. We feel this is the time for Alberta to shine and to leave a bold legacy our children would be proud of.

Respectfully,

AREA Steering Committee

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(NOTE *: Our AREA recommendations to advance rapidly to a lower carbon economy may be found at www.abrenewableenergy.ca.)

(Note **: Specifically recommend that the Government of Alberta prescribe a goal that 20,000 solar photovoltaic (PV) systems be installed on rooftops across Alberta by 2020. We suggest that a rebate of \$1.00 per watt, up to 3,000 watts, be paid to all residential and commercial owners who install PV systems on their buildings. Installation of an average PV system of 3 kWdc at a cost of \$10,000 per installation, would foster a burgeoning \$200 million solar industry in this sunniest of Canadian provinces. Provincial assistance amounting to \$60 million may inspire participating funds from the Federal government and Alberta municipalities.)

- c.c. Dr. Raj Sherman, Leader of the Alberta Liberal Party
- Rachel Notley, Leader of the Alberta NDP
- Hon. Frank Oberle, Minister of Energy
- Steve MacDonald – Special advisor to the Premier on GHG strategy