

19. GETTING TO A CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENT OF 80% BY 2050: THE ROLE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Brock Carlton, CEO, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Devin Causley, Manager, Climate Change Program, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Megan Meaney, Executive Director, ICLEI Canada



PRESENTATION

Brock Carlton opened this session by explaining that climate change issues are a priority for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Devin Causley and Megan Meaney presented details on the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program, “A network of Canadian municipal governments that have committed to reducing greenhouse gases and acting on climate change.” PCP is a FCM and ICLEI initiative that began in 1994. Key elements of the PCP

include a 5-milestone framework that guides GHG emission reductions and a network of participating Canadian municipalities.

Commenting on the GHG emissions recorded by Canada’s provinces over the last 20 years, Meaney highlighted the importance of understanding baselines in order to appropriately compare scenarios. For example, the Yukon has had unusually mild winters, starting in 2009, which she cautioned could give the false impression of progress. Similarly, BC reports relatively low emissions, but the

province continues to export a lot of coal to China, according to Meaney.

Representatives from two leading Canadian municipalities were then invited to present their respective case studies and participants were asked to consider the following guiding questions:

Is a target of 100% local energy generation feasible?

What is the role of renewable in meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets? Is renewable energy a significant contributor to reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

How do we balance a target of 100% renewable energy with local generation?

City of Edmonton

Mark Brostrom, Director, City of Edmonton, discussed three of Edmonton's 12 goals and the energy transition strategy the municipal government established to reach them, independent of other levels of government:

1. Sustainable sources and uses of energy
2. Resiliency of the energy system
3. Carbon neutral city

The City was determined to become a leader in finding practical ways to avoid, reduce, and replace fossil fuel use by building community capacity and establishing regulations that would drive compliance. A key challenge was financing and a key success was getting opinion leaders to declare their support, according to Brostrom. Brostrom closed

with the question: "What's the best way to provide incentives to our communities to move them and the markets to community-wide uptake?" Answers included: Education, including within the school system, and engagement with the affected communities about what progress toward targets would entail; celebrating "early wins"; and promoting ideas with pilot projects and contests. One participant cited a community study that examined what motivates citizens to use high efficiency lightbulbs: while financial savings were important, long-term behaviour change emerged out of knowing "what the neighbours are doing."



EDMONTON'S COMMUNITY ENERGY TRANSITION STRATEGY

(DRAFT)
VERSION 1.1

A framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency and promoting resilient energy systems in Edmonton



City of Yellowknife

Remi Gervais, Energy Coordinator, City of Yellowknife, described Yellowknife as a Second Generation PCP, home to 50% of the Northwest Territories population, with cold and dark winters. Gervais briefly characterized the City's progress and asked participants for advice about whether to pursue a district or individual building approach. Participants recommended assembling a network around reducing demand instead, and clarifying whether the goal is to reduce GHGs or to shift to renewable energy sources.

"Efficiency is a vital, low-cost resource, but it is hard to get and keep peoples' attention on efficiency issues and targets and incentives."

One participant suggested subsidizing solar panels: "Solar is sexy, efficiency isn't!" but another pointed out that efficiency remains an important factor in reducing emissions. One participant cited an analogy where a

father challenged his son to help reduce their household's energy consumption. The incentive was that the son got to pocket the financial savings, which resulted in a \$35-40/month reduction.

One participant suggested that the City could ask the health sector to weigh in on the health impacts of coal-fired plants, but Gervais explained that health falls under provincial jurisdiction.

Session Close

Brock Carlton closed the session by asking participants to advise FCM on the following:

- What is a reasonable, robust environmental agenda for FCM?
- As a convenor, what should FCM do?
- What are the federal policy issues that FCM should be tracking and preparing to respond to?

NEW AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- *“Are we looking to reduce emissions or to recreate energy production?”*
- *“What role do local governments have in incentivizing businesses that contribute significantly to community emissions? Canada’s Local Government Act doesn’t allow local governments to provide incentives to businesses.”*
- *“What’s the best way to proceed in terms of either setting GHG target or renewable energy targets?”*