

## **B.C. sets out tough targets for emissions**

'Aggressive' climate-change law the first of its kind in Canada

**Jeff Rud, Times Colonist**

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B.C. has become the first Canadian province to enshrine greenhouse-gas reduction targets in legislation.

Environment Minister Barry Penner yesterday introduced Bill 44, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act, which mandates that the province's emissions be trimmed by 33 per cent below current levels by 2020.

The law also calls for "realistic, economically viable" interim targets to be set by the end of 2008. And it mandates reduction of emissions by at least 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 205

The bill followed through on climate- change action first promised by the Liberal government in February's throne speech.

It also coincided with yesterday's unveiling of the 22-member Climate Action Team. That team has a distinct Victoria flavour, including noted climate-change expert Andrew Weaver of the University of Victoria's School of Earth & Ocean Sciences.

"This is like a dream come true," said Weaver, one of nine team members who were part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a joint winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. "Here in B.C. we're taking leadership on this climate portfolio -- not only in Canada but also internationally."

The legislation calls on government to produce a report every two years on its progress toward the targets. It also requires all government agencies including schools, colleges, universities, health authorities and Crown corporations to be carbon neutral by 2010.

The Sierra Club of B.C. welcomed the legislation and the formation of the action team, crediting government for "continuing to show leadership on fighting global warming." Spokeswoman Lisa Matthaus said the legislation means a "carbon lens" will have to now be placed on all of government's policies and programs. "I think that will bring a very different perspective to what's happening, say, with [the] Gateway [transportation initiative] and the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge, and oil and gas subsidies."

However, the Sierra Club wants government to commit to having an independent body such as the auditor general's office monitor its progress toward greenhouse-gas reduction. The bill in its current form does not require

that.

NDP environment critic Shane Simpson said he was disappointed that the bill uses 2007 baseline data when referring to B.C.'s 2050 reduction goal. Simpson says that makes B.C.'s goal less aggressive than those of California or some European Union nations who are committing to a reduction of 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. "That should be the number we're striving for," he said.

Penner said B.C.'s 2050 target is supported by the best available science. Government's long-term goal is aggressive, he said, even though it doesn't match some other jurisdictions. Its 2020 targets remain the most aggressive in North America.

The Climate Action Team is tasked with helping the government decide how to reach its long-term targets as well as set interim targets for 2012 and 2016. It is to report by July 31, 2008.

Other local members of the team include Naomi Devine, a UVic student and the co-founder of Common Energy, and chartered accountant and developer Joe Van Belleghem of Three Point Properties.

Among the local ex officio members are senior research scientists Ken Denman, Greg Flato, and John Fyfe, all of the Canadian Centre for Climate Modelling and Analysis at UVic; Werner Kurz, a senior research scientist at the Pacific Forestry Centre; and Terry Prowse and Dr. Frederick Wrona, both of the Water and Climate Impacts Research Centre. Members of the team said they believe government is sincere in its approach to climate change and is looking for real input.

"We have been asked to not hold back," Weaver said. "Anyone who knows me knows that I'm rather skeptical about government, politicians in general, taking action. But here in B.C. I'm not skeptical. This is real leadership that we're seeing here."

Weaver said the government's goal of 33 per cent reduction by 2020 can be done. "The targets are completely realistic," he said. "Not only are they realistic, they're utterly necessary."

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