

Federation of Community Power Co-operatives

March 18, 2013

Dear Minister Chiarelli,

The Federation of Community Power Co-operatives of Ontario would like to congratulate you on your new assignment as Minister of Energy. This is a time of great opportunity for the Ministry of Energy to continue the path toward a clean energy future. With the green energy sector building expertise and momentum in the province, there is a wealth of strength to build upon to make Ontario a national and international leader in green energy generation and technologies.

The Federation of Community Power Co-operatives (“Federation”) is a non-partisan, incorporated organization representing 25 Ontario-based Renewable Energy Co-operatives. The Federation was formed to engage, excite, and enlighten the citizens of Ontario to the tremendous opportunity presented in the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act*.

The generation of renewable energy in our Province via community-owned projects is viable, practical, and cost-effective. Renewable energy co-operatives are ideal mechanisms for Ontario communities committed to green power, and we stand firmly committed to the development of the sector through this model.

Our Federation collectively represents the following direct interests:

- A membership base of more than 5,000 community trailblazers and thought-leaders from across the Province. This number will grow 10-fold as projects come on-line.
- We have within that membership citizens of all ages, genders, economic strata and political affiliation, who share a common interest in participating in renewable energy projects in their communities; and
- Over \$100 Million dollars in community power projects situated throughout Ontario.

We believe the benefits of community-owned renewable power extend well beyond the Federation to benefit the entire Province. First, the community power sector enables and encourages individuals to make long term investments in their local economies, creating a valuable ripple effect that benefits local (and particularly rural) communities. Second, the community power sector supports the green energy industry by leveraging social finance to enable more of Ontario’s citizens to participate in the renewable energy revolution. Third, members of community power co-operatives learn about the benefits of the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act* and about the merits of energy conservation, which supports the goals of the provincial government.

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The *Green Energy and Green Economy Act* has provided an unprecedented opportunity to create jobs and wealth in Ontario. In just three years, Ontario's *Green Energy and Economy Act* has had the following direct results:

- 30,000 jobs;
- 2,500 MW of installed green power capacity;
- Over 50,000 Ontario homeowners, churches, mosques, community centres, schools etc. are putting solar panels on their rooftops and generating income; and
- 1 in 7 Ontario farmers is taking part in the FIT or microFIT program, many of whom are in Conservative ridings.

We sincerely hope that the Government of Ontario will continue to support the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act* and the Feed-In Tariff (FIT) Program. We would like to take this opportunity to make a few suggestions:

1. Stability in the FIT Program: Predictability and stability in the renewable energy development program is essential to attracting investment from corporations and communities, and to driving down the cost of renewable energy generation, thus the FIT rates. Only a stable program will inspire confidence among the residents and businesses of Ontario to invest in the program. At the same time, stability enables a renewable energy manufacturing and installation sector to make the necessary investment, to grow in scale and ultimately drive prices down. We need a steady, reliable and continuous FIT program, one that accepts and processes applications on a continuous basis, to enable continued growth and bring more clean energy and jobs to Ontario. This is the path to building Ontario's competitiveness in the global renewable energy sector.

2. Support for Community Ownership: It is very important that we do not lose the momentum that has built an Ontario renewable energy industry and encouraged community ownership of renewable power sources by the members of FCPC. Community ownership has been very successful in Europe but is only just getting started here in Ontario. The Community and Aboriginal grid capacity "set-asides" in the Small FIT 2.1 program are a good example of how to support the community power sector. Given the volume of applications in the categories, we request the extension of the set-aside to enable success of the 100s of co-ops and first nations projects. Speedy reinstatement of the Community Energy Partnership Program is also paramount. Finally, we encourage collaboration and consistency between the Aboriginal and Community power programs.

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Support for the Community Energy Partnership Program is also paramount. Finally, we would encourage you to find more ways to facilitate collaboration and consistency between the Aboriginal and Community power programs.

3. Raising the Targets for Renewable Power: In order to keep the green energy sector and 30,000 jobs that have come to Ontario because of the FIT program, it is imperative that the provincial targets for renewable power be significantly increased when the Ontario Long Term Energy Plan is reviewed in 2013. Because of the success of FIT Program, the current 2018 targets will likely be met next year, 4 years ahead of schedule. If the targets are not raised, the OPA will cap renewable power at its current levels which would be disastrous for the Province. The green energy sector will pack up and head out of town. There are no sound technical reasons why the targets cannot be raised, especially now that Ontario has fully embraced the transition to a Smart Grid.

The FCPC is motivated by a vision in which every Ontarian has the opportunity to invest, generate, own, and invest in his/her green, local power supply. We see this transition as analogous to the transition from encyclopaedias to Wikipedia, in which every citizen is empowered to play their part, collectively resulting in a much more resilient, accessible, and collaborative outcome. We are working to make this possible by increasing the number of renewable energy co-ops developed at the highest possible standards by establishing best practices through sharing our collective experiences, expertise, tested development tools, and resources. The depth of experience among the Federation is significant and we are working to leverage that expertise to build a thriving community power sector in Ontario. We commit to doing our part to support those leaders who commit to advancing renewable energy in Ontario.

We would very much like to meet with you, Minister Chiarelli, at your earliest convenience, to discuss Community Power in greater detail to ensure that going forward the FIT program is enabling hundreds of thousands of Ontario citizens participate in this vital sector.

Thanks and best regards,

FCPC Board of Directors

- Judith Lipp, TREC/LakeWind Energy Co-operative (GTA & Bruce County), FCPC President
- Shane Mulligan, LIFE Co-operative (Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge and the Waterloo Region)
- Andrew Clarke, Agris Energy Co-operative (Ontario Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and Southwestern Ontario)
- Janice Ashworth, Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative (City of Ottawa)
- Ambrose Raftis, Green Timiskaming Development Co-operative

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(Timiskaming and Northern Ontario)

- Marc Van Beusekom, Guelph Solar and Queen Street Solar Co-operatives (City of Guelph and GTA)

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Appendix A: List of Community Power Groups supporting the CNCP (geographic location given in brackets):

AGRIS Solar Co-op (Ontario Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and Southwestern Ontario)

Barrie WindCatchers (Barrie and Simcoe County)

Green Pathways Community Solar Co-operative (Orangeville and Dufferin County)

Green Timiskaming Development Co-operative (Timiskaming and Northern Ontario)

Guelph Solar Community Co-op (City of Guelph)

Hall's Pond Solar Co-operative (City of Guelph)

Queen Street Solar Co-operative (Metropolitan Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area)

Hamilton Association for Renewable Energy (City of Hamilton and Halton Region)

L.I.F.E. Co-operative (Kitchener---Waterloo and Cambridge and the Waterloo Region)

LakeWind Co-operative (Kincardine and Bruce County)

Options for Green Energy (province---wide co-op support)

Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative (City of Ottawa)

SolarShare Co-operative (Toronto, Mississauga and the GTA; also projects on Manatoulin Island,

Wingham and Teeswater; soon to include St. Catherines and the Niagara Region)

TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative (Province---wide education and co-op services)

Whitchurch---Stouffville Community Energy Co-operative (Whitchurch---Stouffville and the GTA)

WindShare Co-operative (Toronto and the GTA)

Wintergreen Renewable Energy Co-operative (Kingston and Frontenac County)

ZooShare Biogas Co-operative (Toronto and the GTA)

Other associations and bodies supporting the FCPC:

Ontario Co-operative Association, Community Power Fund, Recognised co-op developers and lawyers in Ontario