

DECLARATION

Citizens' Assembly on Electricity Affordability

WHEREAS **affordable electricity** is essential to our quality of life, health and safety, and is a necessity of modern society.



WE BELIEVE the following principles should guide government decision-making about the province's electricity system and the operation of NB Power:

- Demonstrates NB Power is frugal and controls its own costs before asking for a raise through rate increases;
- Shows NB Power is trustworthy because it is honest and transparent;
- Displays accountability by reporting on key performance indicators, issues report cards;
- Creates fair, balanced and equitable outcomes for all ratepayers (e.g., industry pays its fair share, not just households);
- Ensures electricity is accessible to all that need it;
- Operates with citizens' best interests at heart;
- Commits to progressive policy changes and not staying with the status quo; and
- Consider the social effects its policies have on New Brunswickers.



WE BELIEVE the following goals should guide government decision-making about the province's electricity system and the operation of NB Power:

- Affordable for all ratepayers (e.g., low- to moderate-income households);
- Reliable and safe;
- Low-carbon and sustainable from an environmental, social and economic point of view;
- Includes potential for cooperative models (citizen-owned and community-owned projects); and
- Includes decentralized options (e.g., mix of distributed energy sources).



WE BELIEVE the province's electricity strategy
should be based on the following policies:

- Builds a shared electricity vision through public engagement;
- Protects our publicly-owned electricity system;
- Builds an electricity system that is only as big as it needs to be;
- Creates an integrated electricity system (regionally and nationally) for reliability and to support more renewable and non-polluting energy (e.g., wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, biogas);
- Strengthens institutions like the Energy & Utilities Board (e.g., for accountability and transparency);
- Reforms the *Electricity Act* to eliminate government interference and provide public oversight to ensure evidence-based decisions (e.g., technically- and financially-sound decisions that take into account social and environmental effects);
- Reforms incentives (e.g., net metering and taxation of solar, policies);
- Builds a system that maximizes energy efficiency from generation to consumption;
- Provides transition support for workers to train for employment within the new electricity system;
- Pursues rate design that ensures:
 - Base electricity is the cheapest possible rate;
 - Electricity bills are tax-free because it is necessary for modern life;
 - Tiered rates so that the more you use, the more you pay—particularly for industry; and
 - Consideration of time-of-day use rates in response to electrification and to reduce peak loads;
- Strengthens building codes; and
- Ensures an energy literate population, with energy education as a priority.



**WE BELIEVE the following programs should be included
in the province's electricity strategy:**

- Expand the **Enhanced Energy Savings Program** eligibility requirements to include moderate to middle income:
 - Expand eligibility for people who are using a different source of heating (e.g., oil);
 - Remove barriers that make participation difficult;
 - Increase funding to service more homes each year;
- Explore the use of building energy labeling (e.g., following a model used in the U.K.);
- Target landlord energy efficiency to:
 - Provide more power to renters to request efficiency upgrades;
 - Prevent rent increases when upgrades are performed;
- Expand EV, Hybrid and EV charger rebates to make them more accessible:
 - Add micro-electric vehicles to the rebate program (e.g., electric bikes, trikes, cargo carriers);
- Transition towards electric vehicles for public and school transportation (buses, trains); and
- Ensure solar panels are affordable for households (e.g., reducing the upfront costs):
 - Establish a competitive buyback program for households to sell excess energy to the grid;
 - Eliminate tax on excess energy generated by home solar panels;
 - Create bulk-buy solar panel programs for communities;
- Explore the potential of electricity bonds to fund the electricity system transition (solar farm bonds or wind farm bonds) to encourage citizens to buy into the transition; and
- Recognize that rural communities have different program needs than urban communities.