



Newfoundland and Labrador
Environmental Industry
Association

Building the Business of the Environment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEIA Responds to Prime Minister Harper's Eco-Fund Announcement

St. John's, NL, Canada – February 16, 2007 – Prime Minister Stephen Harper has recently announced his government's planned Eco-Trust and Clean Air Fund, which will be activated subject to Parliamentary approval at next month's budget.

The Eco-Fund will be valued at \$1.5 billion, the first \$350 million of which will be earmarked for climate and smog-fighting projects in Quebec.

NEIA strongly endorses compliance with the Kyoto Accord and investment in climate change research, innovation, new equipment and new technologies. Investment in such areas is crucial and can yield economic and social benefits that make sense to consumers while demonstrating environmental responsibility.

NEIA is cautiously optimistic about the benefits that stand to be garnered if Parliament passes the Eco-Fund. NEIA will closely monitor the specific programs that will be offered and the manner in which monies will be allocated to provinces and territories other than Quebec.

There are potential opportunities for this province's new Centre for Environmental Excellence initiative. NEIA endorses the provision of substantial funds toward private sector initiatives and commercially oriented collaborations between research institutions and private industry. Successful commercialization is key to introducing state-of-the-art climate change technologies to the market and addressing climate change in a practical manner. NEIA will endeavour to work with the province to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador benefits from the Eco-Trust.

The Newfoundland and Labrador environment industry is committed to a sustainable Newfoundland and Labrador and is prepared to play a significant role in providing cost-effective solutions which protect our environment and create wealth in our province.

About NEIA – With more than 140 members, the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Industry Association (NEIA) is a high-energy organization whose mandate is to promote the growth and development of the province's environment sector through strong leadership, advocacy, educational and training opportunities, and business development initiatives. In its interactions with government bodies, research and educational institutions, and private enterprise, NEIA acts as a common voice for member companies and organizations. Visit www.neia.org for more information.

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BACKGROUND

Climate Change

Climate change has been defined as altered long-term weather patterns. Global warming is a rise in the average global temperature, and is a measure of climate change. Global average temperature has risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius since 1900, and the northern hemisphere is substantially warmer now than at any point during the past 1,000 years (David Suzuki).

Recent research indicates that climate change will not necessarily be gradual, but may instead involve sudden jumps between very different states. As is currently happening, the earth first stands to get significantly and rapidly warmer, hallmarked by the melting of glaciers, increased violent and catastrophic storm activity, the northward creeping of tropical vegetation and insects, summers becoming sufficiently hot as to cause death, and shorter, milder winters. After sufficient decades, however, the warming may ironically cause a sudden drop in temperature around the North Atlantic. Temperatures in North America and western Europe could eventually plunge by 5 degrees Celsius, such that winters will be much colder and snowier. They would damage crops, shorten the growing season, and necessitate new infrastructure. The costs associated with all changes would be enormous.

Climate change is arguably the most consequential and pressing issue that governments must currently address. It is considered by many scientists to be the most serious threat facing the world today.

The impact of climate change was outlined in the report released following the January 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC Fourth Assessment, 1st volume), in Paris. The conclusion of this conference (confidence > 90%) was that global warming is "unequivocal" and that human activity is the main driver of this warming.

Reducing the use of fossil fuels is the only strategy available to reduce the risk of catastrophic climate surprises.