

Expanding Opportunities For Renewable Energy In Ontario

New Standard Price Will Add Up To 1,000 Megawatts Over The Next 10 Years

CAMBRIDGE — Ontario is leading the way in using clean, renewable electricity by setting a standard price that will make it easier for entrepreneurs and businesses to sell clean power from small projects to the grid, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced today.

"We're taking a bold new step that will allow hundreds of small, local, renewable energy producers to get into the energy market — providing cleaner energy that will help meet Ontario's needs today — and in the future," said Premier McGuinty.

The Premier made the announcement at Photowatt Technologies in Cambridge, joined by Ontario's Minister of Energy Donna Cansfield and world-renowned scientist Dr. David Suzuki. Until now, it was too costly and complex for small, renewable power producers — such as farmers, rural landowners, community groups, First Nations, business owners or municipalities — to sell their energy to the grid.

Through Ontario's Standard Offer Program, the government will set a fixed price for small renewable energy projects. Under the plan, the Ontario Power Authority will purchase electricity produced by wind, biomass or small hydroelectric at a base price of 11 cents per kilowatt-hour. The fixed price for solar will be 42 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Over the next ten years, this will help add up to 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy to Ontario's electricity supply — enough to power 250,000 homes. It will help ease the strain on Ontario's electricity system, reduce air pollution, promote reliability, protect the environment and create new, high-skill jobs.

"The McGuinty government is committed to expanding the opportunities for clean and renewable generation in Ontario," Cansfield said. "Through the program, Ontarians will have an opportunity to improve our air quality and take advantage of a whole new revenue stream."

"Ontarians need a reliable power system that doesn't leave a legacy of economic or environmental debt," said Suzuki. "Today's announcement will revolutionize the market for clean, renewable energy in North America and lay the groundwork for a healthier, brighter future."

"This is great news for renewable energy and all Ontario communities," said Deborah Doncaster, Executive Director of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association. "The government has delivered on its commitment for a Standard Offer Program which will help smaller and community-based projects participate in building a sustainable electricity system." Setting standard rates for renewable power is part of the government's plan to build a clean, affordable, reliable and sustainable energy supply in Ontario. In 2004, the government committed to generating five per cent — or 1,350 megawatts — of electricity through renewable sources by 2007. In the last year, Ontario has contracted for more than 1,300 megawatts of new, renewable power.

"Standard Offer contracts have been the fastest and most successful way of producing renewable energy throughout the world," said Premier McGuinty. "Encouraging communities to develop more renewable electricity will spur the kind of innovation in the energy sector that will help clean up our air, create jobs and contribute to our long-term prosperity."