



Media Release

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Alternatives North Report Evaluates 100% Renewable Energy Futures

An engineering concept study has concluded that the NWT could be running on 100% renewable energy by 2050 using technology that is commercially available today.

"A 100% Renewable Energy NWT by 2050 – Starting the Conversation" - was prepared for Alternatives North by mechanical engineer and former executive director of the Arctic Energy Alliance, Andrew Robinson.

"Diesel and gasoline are already expensive and now that carbon pricing is becoming a reality, it is time we seriously look at renewable energy options in all sectors of our economy", says Tasha Stephenson of Alternatives North.

The report establishes criteria and evaluates over 100 renewable energy options covering all sectors of energy use; heating, transportation, the mining industry and electricity production.

"We had to be very strict in rejecting any technologies that were not already commercially available" says Robinson "Infrastructure built today will be around for decades and could lock us into a non-renewable future – so we need to work with commercially available technologies starting right now."

The report recognizes that NWT winters are cold, dark and long, and that the vast distances between inhabited areas are not all connected by roads or electricity grids. In a 100% renewable energy future, biofuels could provide up to 90% of the energy supply in the NWT because, like fossil fuels, they can be transported and stored for up to several years between fuel deliveries. The key biofuels are wood, wood chips, wood pellets, compressed and liquid biogas and bio-jet fuel.

Currently, less than 10% of the NWT's energy supply comes from local sources, but hydro, solar, wind and, particularly, local biomass could increase that to 70%, which could create new "green" jobs in the North. "We need to develop the skills needed for these new green jobs," says Jack Bourassa of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), "we will need everything from electricians trained in wind and solar to sustainable forest managers and trades knowledgeable in the latest in energy efficient construction methods".

By releasing the report now, Alternatives North and their partners hope to stimulate debate about a 100% Renewable Energy future for the NWT – particularly during the period when the GNWT is launching public consultations on their next Climate Change Framework and Energy Plan.

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