



# The United Church of Canada General Council

## GC40 Energy Subsidies (GC 40 2009 - 062)

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That the 40th General Council 2009, through the General Secretary, General Council, request the Government of Canada and the provincial and territorial governments to encourage, to support, and to provide financial incentives and subsidies to alternative and environmentally friendly sources of energy, and subsidies to the uranium/nuclear industry be limited to only medical and peaceful initiatives; and call on members and adherents of The United Church of Canada congregations to write their members of parliament to express the same desire.

GC40 2009 ROP, p. 190

### SK 3 - Energy Subsidies

**Origin:** Saskatchewan Conference

Division of Mission

**Financial Implications:**

**Staffing Implications:**

**Source of Funding:**

That the 40th General Council 2009, through the General Secretary, General Council, request the Government of Canada to encourage, to support, and to provide financial incentives and subsidies to alternative and environmentally friendly sources of energy, and discontinue giving subsidies to the uranium/nuclear industry.

**Background**

Whereas the United Church in 2003 endorsed the “Earth Charter” appealing for enterprises which contributed to the sustainability of our planet, and then in 2004 issued the “One Earth Community” outlining twelve ethical principles for environmental and development issues<sup>1</sup>; and

Whereas there has been an accelerating concern regarding global warming, largely due to the use of fossil fuels; and

Whereas there have been remarkable innovations with regard to alternate sources of energy like wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass; and

Whereas Germany, under the policies of Dr. Herman Scheer, has installed 22,000 megawatts of wind power—as much as all our Canadian nuclear reactors—generating \$240 billion in annual revenues, employing 240,000 workers, creating 8000 new jobs in 2007 alone. Moreover, Germany plans to install 24 more offshore wind turbines in the coming year adding 24,000 megawatts, so that its nuclear reactors can be shut down. In addition, Spain has developed a wind energy capacity of 15,000 megawatts—enough to power 10 cities<sup>2</sup>; and

Whereas Amory B. Lovins, Imran Sheikh, and Alex Markevich have calculated that the cost of electricity from a new nuclear plant will be 14 cents per kilowatt hour, and that from a wind farm will be 7 cents per kilowatt hour. This includes the cost of fuel, capital, operations, maintenance, transmission and distribution. It does not include nuclear costs of disposing of radioactive waste, insurance against nuclear accidents, or decommissioning of worn out reactors<sup>3</sup>; and

Whereas Ontario has developed a wind capacity of 950 megawatts; Alberta has developed 545 megawatts of wind capacity; Quebec has developed 422 megawatts of wind capacity; and Saskatchewan has developed 172 megawatts of wind capacity. The Canadian Wind Energy Association estimated that in 2006 there were 2785 people employed in the wind industry<sup>4</sup>; and

Whereas many new inventions have transpired in wind energy from high towers with blades of 413 feet in diameter, to small, upright, cylindrical models for rooftop installations on buildings, thereby making wind chargers available to a great many individuals and communities who are dispersed across the country<sup>5</sup>; and

Whereas to accommodate “base load” power needs, new computerized control systems have emerged to draw on wind, or solar, or hydro power-- when the wind is not blowing or the sky is cloudy—a combination and supplementation of various sources to meet the energy needs<sup>6</sup>; and

Whereas there is a steadily increasing revolution in solar energy, with the invention of light, flexible panels printed like a newspaper onto aluminum foil for much cheaper than previous silicon models, and besides, the sunlight is free! California is set to buy 3,600 megawatts of solar power from several plants. Japan, Greece, France, Spain, Australia and Holland rely heavily on solar power<sup>7</sup>; and

Whereas geothermal systems are being steadily improved and installed for home and factory heating. This is an important feature for renewable energy with 96 projects in the USA. The Saskatchewan Government has initiated new financing programs for geothermal home heating systems with low interest loans of up to \$25,000 per installation, and up to \$35,000 in rebates for those who self-generate power by wind or solar<sup>8</sup>; and

Whereas the federal government is providing a \$658 million subsidy to the uranium/nuclear industry in the current budget, and has provided \$17 billion<sup>9</sup> in cumulative subsidies to the uranium/nuclear industry over the last fifty years; and

## **References:**

(1) The Earth Charter, [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org) 2/6 See also: United Church of Canada, 2000, “Energy in the One Earth Community: current challenges and future options

for energy use in the Canadian and global contexts.” Statement of the 37th General Council. [www.unitedchurch.ca/ecology/energy/oneearth](http://www.unitedchurch.ca/ecology/energy/oneearth)

(2) Globe and Mail, Aug. 2, 2008, p. F7, section: Science, Article by Chris Turner [cturner@globeandmail.com](mailto:cturner@globeandmail.com) See also: [www.hermanscheer.de/en/\\_28k](http://www.hermanscheer.de/en/_28k) See also: [www.topix.net/nuclear-energy/2008/07/german-govt-has-approved-enough-wind-parks-to-replace-nuclearpower-plants](http://www.topix.net/nuclear-energy/2008/07/german-govt-has-approved-enough-wind-parks-to-replace-nuclearpower-plants). See also: The Telegraph UK, April 16, 2008 <http://.telegraph.co.uk/money/main-jhtml?xm1=money2008/04.07/ecwind107.xml>

(3) “The Nuclear Illusion”, by Amory Lovins, Imran Sheikh, and Alex Markevich of the Rocky Mountain Institute. Copyright 2008 See also: “The Flawed Economics of Nuclear Power”, by Lester Brown [www.earthpolicy.org/Updates/2008/Update78.htm](http://www.earthpolicy.org/Updates/2008/Update78.htm)

(4) “Ontario Becomes Wind Power Leader in Canada”, Oct. 30, 2008 [www.Ontario.ca/energy-news](http://www.Ontario.ca/energy-news) See also: [www.energy.gov.on.ca](http://www.energy.gov.on.ca) See also: [www.canwea.ca](http://www.canwea.ca)

(5) “Want Your Own Wind Turbine? Here’s Our Guide”, by Philip Proefrock, Sept. 11, 2008 [www.ecogeek.org?content/view/2118](http://www.ecogeek.org?content/view/2118) See also: [www.aerotecture.com](http://www.aerotecture.com) (new wind turbines by Dr.Bill Becker)

(6) Toronto Star, Dec. 18, 2008, “Green giant urges energy rethink”, by Tyler Hamilton [www.thestar.com/article/555638](http://www.thestar.com/article/555638)

(7) The Guardian, Dec. 29, 2007, “Solar energy ‘revolution’ brings green power closer”, by John Vidal, environment editor, [www.guardian.ca.uk/environment/2007/dec/29/solarpower,renewableenergy](http://www.guardian.ca.uk/environment/2007/dec/29/solarpower,renewableenergy)

See also: The Globe and Mail, Nov. 13, 2006, p.B6 “Nanosolar set for expected clean-tech boom” See also: CBC—“The Nature of Things,” by David Suzuki, April 8, 1999. Solar power heavily used in Japan, France, Australia, Greece, Holland and California. See also: Associated Press, New York, Aug. 13, 2008 “Pacific Gas and Electric Co. to buy power from 2 large solar farms in Central California coast”

(8) Earth Policy Institute, “Creating New Jobs by Investing in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency”, by Lester

R. Brown, Dec. 11, 2008 [www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2008/Update80\\_printable.htm](http://www.earth-policy.org/Updates/2008/Update80_printable.htm) See also: News Release Dec. 15, 2008 “New Financing Programs for Geothermal Heating and Renewable Power

Systems” [www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=9abb4c30-a8ed-4f81-8419-66f85cf4eef9](http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=9abb4c30-a8ed-4f81-8419-66f85cf4eef9)

See also: The Canadian Geothermal Coalition—[www.geo-exchange.ca](http://www.geo-exchange.ca)

(9) “Canadian Nuclear Subsidies: Fifty Years of Futile Funding”, by David H. Martin, January 2003, Campaign for Nuclear Phaseout. [www.cnp.ca/resources/nuclear subsidies of 50.pdf](http://www.cnp.ca/resources/nuclear%20subsidies%20of%2050.pdf)

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