



The United Church of Canada General Council

GC40 Concerning the Development of Wind and Other Renewable Energy (GC 40 2009 - 064)

True Document Date
August 14, 2009

That the 40th General Council 2009 direct the General Secretary, General Council, to urge federal, provincial and territorial governments to invest in wind and other forms of renewable energy immediately, in an amount comparable to other western nations.

GC40 2009 ROP, p. 191

SK 2 - Concerning the Development of Wind and Other Renewable Energy

Origin: Saskatchewan Conference

Division of Mission

Financial Implications:

Staffing Implications:

Source of Funding:

That the 40th General Council 2009 direct the General Secretary, General Council to urge the Government of Canada to invest in wind and other forms of renewable energy immediately, in an amount that is comparable to the \$54 billion that has been budgeted for this purpose in the United States (proportional to our population, of course).

Background

Preamble – The intent of this Proposal is to ask that Saskatchewan Conference and General Council urge the Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada, respectively, to immediately invest in significant expansion of the wind energy industry, and seriously consider developing other renewables as well, rather than engaging in any further nuclear expansion.

Whereas we are called to live with respect in creation, and our striving to do so is made ever more urgent by the issue of climate change and the consequent need to develop alternative, sustainable sources of energy; and

Whereas wind energy, though still in its infancy in Saskatchewan, shows the most promise as the next logical step in this search for safe, renewable energy for the following reasons:

1. Wind power is 3–4 times less expensive than current solar energy technology, and far less expensive than nuclear energy to bring on-stream (7¢ per kilowatt hour for wind vs. 14–25¢ per kwh for nuclear); this means that the \$3–3 ½ billion that full investment in wind energy requires is much less than the \$8–\$10 billion requested by the nuclear industry;
2. Wind power could easily be developed at a variety of sites across Saskatchewan, which would take advantage of the fact that the wind is always blowing somewhere in the province, and this technology could be up and running in just 18 months;

3. Wind power produces dramatically less emissions compared with coal, oil, natural gas, or nuclear power;
4. Wind power does not introduce the ethical issue of leaving a legacy of extraordinarily expensive radioactive waste disposal for future generations to deal with; wind power, in fact, leaves no waste;
5. Wind power does not introduce health or safety risks, as the several hundred turbines that would be needed could be spread out over the province (which is also advantageous for economic and other reasons);
6. The use of wind power embodies a real and emphatic strategy to combat climate change; and

Whereas development of wind power would not further deplete our water supply, water that other sources of energy (such as nuclear) would require in massive quantities; and

Whereas since all sources of energy require full back-up, wind as a major source of power in Saskatchewan could rely on existing Manitoba and Saskatchewan hydroelectric power, supplemented by new run-of-the-river hydroelectric power that could be produced in our North in partnership with First Nations (in contrast with nuclear power, which would be backed up by existing Saskatchewan coal-fired plants, therefore not significantly reducing emissions, and which seems like an irresponsible choice); and

Whereas development of wind power could easily be complemented by:

- Producing energy from waste wood on forest fringes;
- Making use of the waste heat given off at natural gas compressor stations;
- Producing energy by capturing the waste methane given off at both the Saskatoon and Regina landfills; which strategies, taken together, would give

sustainability to the provincial energy grid; and

Whereas accompanying the development of wind power, a source of energy that has been very successful in other parts of the world, with an investment in energy efficiencies could, over the next 15 years, greatly reduce Saskatchewan's demand for energy in the first place, and identify Saskatchewan as a world leader in these areas;

Whereas we, as a faithful people, must seek solutions that will unite rather than divide us; whole communities can enthusiastically embrace renewable solutions to our energy needs, and development of nuclear energy would most certainly divide our communities, perhaps irreparably; and

Therefore be it resolved that Saskatchewan Conference of The United Church of Canada strongly urge the Government of Saskatchewan, and especially the Premier, the Minister of Industry and Resources, the Minister of the Environment, and the Finance Minister, following environmental assessments, to immediately make plans to invest \$3-\$3½ billion in expansion of our fledgling wind energy industry, and to report to the Saskatchewan people that it has done so; and

References:

1. Saskatchewan Environmental Society. "Position on Nuclear Power". March 2009.
2. Prebble, Peter. Presentation made to River Bend Presbytery. February 21, 2009.
3. Adamson, Dr. Bill. "Problems Associated with Nuclear Reactors on the North Saskatchewan River".
4. Harding, Dr. Jim. Presentation made to public meeting in Paradise Hill, Sask. March 9, 2009

GC40 2009 ROP, pp. 529-530

Document Type: [Social Policy](#)

General Council: [GC43 or earlier](#)

Originating Body: [Other](#)