

Media Bulletin

For Immediate Release

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Ecology Action Centre Won't Support NSPI Rate Increase
Environmental Group Says Efficiency is Cheaper

Halifax - The Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia's largest environmental organization, will not be supporting Nova Scotia Power's request to increase electricity rates in hearings starting next week.

Why? Because the Centre says NSPI is neglecting an abundant and cheap energy resource and wasting money on fossil fuels instead. Energy efficiency is the resource the Centre is proposing could provide lower rates over the long term.

"A lot of money and expertise is being used at this rate case to argue about fuel costs. But all the while, we have been neglecting efficiency: the cheapest, cleanest and most abundant option that is available to us" says Energy Coordinator, Brendan Haley.

An issue sheet authored by the Centre titled *Efficiency: Nova Scotia's Forgotten Energy Resource* explains that it costs much less for utilities to invest in efficiency improvements than it does for them to keep burning the fossil fuels that have been responsible for rate increases and global warming. For example, the state of Vermont would have had to pay 63% more to produce energy than it cost them to save it through their comprehensive energy efficiency program. Here in Nova Scotia, such a program would provide market standards, direct expertise, outreach, and financial incentives to citizens and businesses to increase energy efficiency.

The Centre says many provinces and states have already ordered utilities to make mandatory investments in energy efficiency through a *Demand Side Management Plan*. In the last rate case the UARB ordered NSPI to create a comprehensive Demand Side Management Plan. The plan was to be developed by the fall of 2006, but it a yearlong delay is now expected. The Ecology Action Centre says that is embarrassing and unacceptable.

"Nova Scotians should be asking the government, the UARB, and Nova Scotia Power why it is taking so long to invest in efficiency, given that we know it will save all ratepayers money in the future, help lower energy bills, and reduce pollution," said Brendan Haley.

The Centre will not be supporting rate increases for the burning of fossil fuels that are responsible for the global climate crisis. Financing NSPI's pollution is even more inexcusable given that a cheaper alternative is readily available.

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