

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Atlantic Provinces Urged to Increase Climate Change Action

Halifax, Nova Scotia – July 8 2011 - A coalition of Atlantic Canadian environmental groups have released report cards outlining the progress Atlantic Provinces have made on their commitments under the 2001 Climate Change Action Plan of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP). The annual NEG-ECP meeting is being held in Halifax July 11-13.

The Atlantic Canada Sustainable Energy Coalition (ACSEC) has monitored the progress of NEG-ECP members toward their objectives since 2001. ACSEC is a coalition of non-governmental organizations comprised of the Ecology Action Centre, Sierra Club Canada – Atlantic, the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, and the Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island.

“The NEG-ECP Climate Change Action Plan has provided the framework for the region’s provincial and state policies on energy and climate change over the past decade,” explains Catherine Abreu, ACSEC’s Regional Facilitator.

Each of the Atlantic Provinces, except for PEI, fell short of achieving the 2010 milestone of reducing emissions to 1990 levels. In 2009, the last year for which data are available, greenhouse gas emissions in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland were 9.5%, 15.4% and 2.7% above 1990 levels, respectively. Provinces revised their commitment to reducing to 1990 levels by 2012.

ACSEC members agree that more aggressive regional greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets are required to avoid destabilizing the global climate. To support Atlantic Provinces meeting their 2012 goal and reducing emissions further by 2020, a second phase of the NEG-ECP Climate Change Action Plan must be implemented.

ACSEC urges the NEG-ECP to adopt a scientifically relevant target of 25% below 1990 GHG levels by 2020 in a second commitment period of the regional Climate Change Action Plan.

	NB	NL	NS	PEI
Overall Grade	B	D-	B	B
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	A	C+	B+	A
Energy Efficiency	A	D-	A	B-
Renewables	B	F	B	B+
Transportation	D	F	D	D
Regional Policy Integration + Cooperation	A-	A-	A-	A-

Overall, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island received mid-range grades on their progress. Newfoundland and Labrador received a failing grade. Regional cooperation and energy efficiency are areas where the Atlantic Provinces have made significant strides. More aggressive action on renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions reductions is required in each of the Provinces. Reducing emissions from transportation is an area that receives very little attention in the region.

“The glaring gap in Atlantic Canada’s efforts to do its share to fight global warming is in the area of transportation,” says David Coon of New Brunswick-based Conservation Council. “Emissions from transportation are on the rise in every province,” adds Tony Reddin of the Environmental Coalition of Prince Edward Island. While PEI’s total emissions are down from 1990 levels, road transportation emissions have risen 22%. “Priority must be placed on creating public transportation infrastructure in the Atlantic Provinces and developing an integrated sustainable transportation plan for the region,” concludes Reddin.

“The creation of an Atlantic public transportation authority to develop and operate public transportation for the region is required. If we can have a regional lottery organization to coordinate gambling, we should be able to do the same for public transportation,” says ACSEC Coordinator, Catherine Abreu.

Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province that has not yet implemented policies mandating increased electricity generation from renewable sources. Gretchen Fitzgerald of Sierra Club’s Atlantic Canada chapter says continued and increased support for renewables is essential. “The Provinces can do a better job of developing complementary policies that enhance the role of renewables in Atlantic Canada. Investing in provincial and regional grid systems and moving away from large-scale, centralized electricity production will help us get there.”

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia lead the way in the area of efficiency. Both provinces have Energy Efficiency Agencies. “Energy efficiency and conservation are the most economical ways to simultaneously reduce emissions and save rate payers money,” says Brennan Vogel of Nova Scotia-based Ecology Action Centre. “Further establishing aggressive and innovative efficiency programs and services for all fuel types, including home heating fuels, can transform energy use and reduce emissions in the region.”

“We’ve seen unprecedented cooperation between the Atlantic Provinces on energy issues in recent years,” observes Abreu. ACSEC members agree that regional initiatives like the Atlantic Energy Gateway and NEG-ECP are vital, especially in the absence of strong Federal-level guidance on energy and climate change policy. “We emphasize that such initiatives must include representation from all levels of concern in Atlantic Canadian communities. ACSEC also cautions against losing sight of the ultimate goal – reducing emissions and turning the tide on climate change.”

ACSEC would like to see the NEG-ECP improve regional communities’ abilities to adapt as they confront the already extensive impacts of climate upheaval.

In 2007 an interim review of the Climate Change Action Plan suggested regional governments focus their efforts on four priority areas. ACSEC has graded each of the Atlantic Provinces on their progress in these areas as well as their emissions reductions.

For copies of the Nova Scotia Report Card and more information, contact:

Catherine Abreu
Regional Coordinator
ACSEC
902 442 0199
acsec@ecologyaction.ca

Brennan Vogel
Energy Coordinator
Ecology Action Centre
902 442 0199
energy@ecologyaction.ca

For Newfoundland, New Brunswick, & PEI, Contact:

Gretchen Fitzgerald
Director
*Sierra Club Canada – Atlantic
Canada Chapter*
902 444 3113
gretchenf@sierraclub.ca

David Coon
Executive Director
*Conservation Council of New
Brunswick*
506 458 8747
dcoon@conservationcouncil.ca

Tony Reddin
Energy Coordinator
*Environmental Coalition of
Prince Edward Island*
902 675 4093
ecopei.project@gmail.com