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Media Release

Budget a Boon to Green Jobs: Alberta Green Economy Network

More focus needed on community owned renewables, low-income and First Nations.

14 April 2016 (Edmonton)- Members of the Alberta Green Economy Network (AGEN), a diverse coalition of Alberta-based green businesses, labour unions, NGOs, and First Nations supporters, released the following statement in response the release of Alberta's 2016/17 budget:

"We're glad to see action on the government's commitment to ushering in Alberta's renewable age. This will create jobs, diversify Alberta's economy, and start to get Alberta off the oil rollercoaster."

"As the government moves to implement this plan we encourage the government to prioritize community-owned renewables so more Albertans can benefit from the province's renewable uptake."

-Randall Benson, GridWorks Renewable Energy.

"We commend Alberta on joining with every other jurisdiction in North America (except Arkansas) to create an energy efficiency program."

“These investments will reduce emissions, save Albertans money and create jobs. Going forward, we want to see energy efficiency investments prioritize low-income people as well as First Nations and Metis communities.”

“At the same time, we are concerned that the targeted annual investment of \$175 million will unlock only about one sixth of Alberta’s efficiency potential. An investment of one third of Alberta’s expected carbon revenue has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17.8 megatonnes per year, and create 46,000 permanent jobs.”

-Godo Stoyke, President, Carbon Busters Inc.

“Investments in public transportation will help drive economic growth, enhance quality of life, and transition Alberta to a low carbon economy. This is an opportune time to make real changes in how Albertans get around and we are glad to see investments in this crucial category.”

“We would encourage the province to also look at providing programs to promote the use of electric vehicles to help decarbonize Alberta’s transport sector and provide direct benefits to consumers. ”

-Anna Bubel, Owner of Another Way Alberta.

“The commitments to invest in innovation and technology are good, but need to be guided by clear public oversight.”

“It’s important that these investments achieve real emissions reductions for Albertans and prioritize public projects:”

-Emilia Kennedy, Greenpeace Canada.

"This is the opportunity for Alberta to demonstrate, through action, that they truly respect the voice of Indigenous Peoples, their Indigenous Knowledge and expertise with the relationship to Mother Earth, and honour the reciprocal three treaty territorial relationships on which the 1905 Province of Alberta is situated, within 1876 Treaty No. 6, 1877 Treaty No. 7, and 1899 Treaty No. 8. We see investment in Indigenous renewable energy projects as a priority.”

“Going forward, we want to see a tangible commitment to support green infrastructure for Indigenous Peoples from the Province of Alberta. This could include renewable energy, sustainability, and energy efficiency improvements, but also training programs that will enable young people and transitioning workers to build careers in the green economy.”

-Shannon Houle, Councillor with Saddle Lake Cree Nation.

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Background

The Alberta Green Economy Network (AGEN) brings together labour, NGO, green business and First Nations partners to advocate for policies that support a transition to a low-carbon economy.

In September, AGEN sent a submission to the province's Climate Change Advisory Panel outlining how the province could create more than 54,000 jobs a year while lowering the carbon emissions that are putting the planet's climate in peril.

AGEN has been advocating for the following policies as key components of any climate plan:

- Science based emission reduction targets in line with other International and provincial jurisdiction
- A target of 100% renewable energy by 2050
- An energy efficiency strategy that would employ tens of thousands of Albertans while lowering energy bills
- A price on carbon starting in 2016 at \$50/tonne and rising to \$120/tonne by 2025 to help fund green jobs, retro-fits and transit while supporting low income Albertans