

February 1, 2010

Hon. Gordon Campbell
Premier, Government of British Columbia
premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Campbell,

B.C. needs to overcome some significant challenges if our economy is going to be powered by the efficient use of clean energy – whether it is creating the right conditions to make clean energy solutions viable or finding ways to engage British Columbians in future clean energy development. Our province clearly has the resources and ingenuity to overcome these challenges, and the government has an important role to ensure they are brought together in a timely and constructive manner that benefits British Columbians.

The Green Energy Advisory Task Forces were given mandates broad enough to look at many of these challenges and propose better ways to support, plan and permit clean energy in B.C. The task forces have been criticized because the process and resulting recommendations lack transparency, and because the process was too rushed to adequately consider the complexity of the issues and different viewpoints.

As a member of the task force on resource development, I agree with these concerns. I also believe they can be addressed when the government takes action following the task force recommendations. The level of success in addressing the concerns will hinge on the degree to which policy changes are implemented in a transparent and inclusive manner. Being transparent and inclusive won't always be easy, but failing to do so will entrench resistance to any new policy directions.

The first step should be to release the recommendations from each of the task forces publicly – a recommendation the Pembina Institute made in December. The task forces were announced in a public manner, public input was solicited and there is a reasonable expectation that the recommendations will be released publicly after government has received and considered them. This would follow the model of the Climate Action Team.

My desire to see the recommendations released publicly is reinforced by my experiences on the resource development task force. The degree to which all of the resource development task force members worked toward consensus was encouraging, as was the respectful and constructive spirit of the discussions. Whether or not people agree with the recommendations, I believe their release would help British Columbians shift from confrontation to solutions.

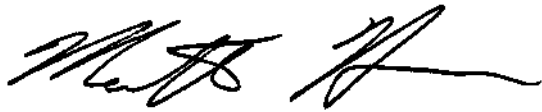
After releasing the recommendations, the next steps will be implementing the range of solutions needed to ensure clean energy in B.C. is supported, planned and permitted more effectively. Some solutions will be simple and can be put into action quickly. Others will be more complicated and will require more effort and engagement to be implemented effectively.

Of particular importance will be decisions about how much clean electricity should be built in B.C. and where these projects should happen. These are complex and impassioned issues that demand creative thinking and transparent engagement to develop enduring solutions. Building broad support for future development will take time and effort. That effort needs to commence quickly, but trying to rush through it will result in slower progress toward the economic and environmental goals British Columbians want to achieve.

As someone who wants to see B.C. successfully transition to a low-carbon economy powered by the efficient use of clean energy, the divisive debates surrounding clean energy in this province have been immensely frustrating. Ultimately, British Columbians should be proud of the directions we take. I sincerely hope that your government will take a proactive role in helping to resolve some of those debates and in building an environment in which British Columbians are engaged in the future of clean energy in the province. Those steps need to happen without delay.

The Pembina Institute supports clean energy and energy efficiency as climate change solutions and we are committed to helping B.C. make them happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Horne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matt Horne
Director, B.C. Energy Solutions
Pembina Institute

cc:

Hon. Blair Leckstrom, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Hon. Barry Penner, Minister of Environment
Hon. John Yap, Minister of State for Climate Action
Kevin Jardine, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Greg Reimer, Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Doug Konkin, Deputy Minister of Environment