

**Energy Vision Group
Communications Brain Trust and Planning Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2006, Centre for Social Innovation**

Present: Tonya Surman, Facilitator; Shawn-Patrick Stensil, Greenpeace; Jose Etcheverry, DSF; Theresa McClenaghan, CELA; Paul Muldoon, CELA; Jennifer Agnolin, CELA;; Joslyn Higginson, Greenpeace International; Andrew Male, Greenpeace; David Israelson

Late Arrivals: Kim Fry, TEA; Gord Perks, TEA; John Willis, StatCom; Brad from Green Living Communications; Chris Winter, Conservation Council

Regrets: Kathy Cooper, CELA; Melinda Zytaruk, OSEA; Mark Winfield, Pembina

Meeting Commenced: 1:00 pm

Proceedings:

1) Introductions and review of the agenda by Tonya

2) Context

- a) Presentation by Joslyn Higginson, analyzing the history and development of the nuclear industry's public relations campaign, timeline: from Three Mile Island in 1979 to present
 - In 1983, the nuclear industry began a mass ad campaign that was halted with the Chernobyl disaster in 1986
 - Review of current media headlines indicate public acceptance of nuclear power
 - The biggest challenges in the US have been regulatory and public opinion
 - Overall, the nuclear industry campaign has a concerted global message
 - US still driving new nuclear agenda, ex. GNEP (Global Nuclear Energy Program)
 - Chart re number of nuclear articles in media in US & UK over time; a clear resurgence in 2000 & 2001 coinciding with the election of Bush
 - In the US in 2005, positive coverage v. negative coverage of nuclear plants has been fairly evenly divided
 - Key issues in the US: US Energy Bill resurrection; waste is still the main public concern (an ongoing issues), unwillingness of Wall Street to get behind the industry; US has been successful in moving the view that green power can't meet the demand
 - Media has pointed to France as a success story of a nation living with nuclear power; need to counter this example by pointing out the problems in that system and highlighting the fact that public opinion polls show that 80% of the public in France are anti-nuclear
 - The nuclear industry's strategic plan had a three-phase approach (need a similarly strong and clear approach)

- 1) In the 90's they organized their forces, 'got their house in order' and started to develop core messaging centres with one purpose, one plane and one voice
 - 2) Sold the idea to elites and had them deliver their message
 - 3) Garnering public opinion (currently in this phase); good use of public opinion polls and think tank studies
- Methods used: use of environmental concerns (global warming), use of elite support, use of endorsers, highlighted and acted upon the divides in the environmental movement, dismissed energy alternatives, established "truth squads" to fight the anti-nuke message, downplayed the risk of nuclear power, strategic advertising to government, advertising targeted at youth (cartoons etc...), and worked closely with analysts and business journalists
 - Result of the campaign: internationally, support for nuclear power has grown 4% in 2004 and 2005. Indicates that the campaign has been largely unsuccessful. Joslyn: it is working at breaking down the barriers
 - Key Messages: IAEA public opinion poll (available on their website) of citizens in 18 countries in May of 2005, highlights: 6/10 don't want new nuclear plants and 78% don't believe they are safe
 - *Arrival: Gord Perks, Kim Fry and John Willis*
 - The group then got into a discussion on strategy
 - David: economics is a good point to attack nuclear on. Must highlight ineffective use of money, cost overruns, the current state of existing plants, note that the public sector won't pay for new plants and in Ontario, they will need private funding
 - David: Government is afraid of losing public support if the lights go out; an alternative plan needs to be presented (ex. Denmark, Germany, Spain)
 - Jose: there are different views on nuclear power in the West and uranium stocks are up; caveat: not enough uranium
 - David: a pro-renewables campaign will have more weight; people grew up with the anti-nuke campaign and are already familiar with it's message.
 - Paul: provincial government now has a strict mindset that they must keep the lights on and nuclear is the only way to do this; how do you get them out of this?
 - David: must effectively demonstrate the alternative. Question is how to do this. Iceland and Manitoba have done this effectively.
 - Joslyn: need combination anti-nuke and pro-renewables campaign. Another point of attack: the emission of GHG's.
 - David: agrees with Joslyn on the GHG's point but note that it entails a very detailed and qualified argument; nuke industry will respond with their science and the argument won't hold the public's attention.
 - Gord: there is public suspicion that what works in Europe will actually work in North America; it will have to shown that it does. Portland is an excellent example, a lot of powerful players involved. Jose: California also an example.
 - *David left the meeting at this point*

- Jose: danger with the either/or scenario of renewables vs. nukes because of the OPA report's terminology of a 'mixed' supply.
 - Jose: Two Achilles heels of the nuclear industry: security and radioactive waste
 - John: are now dealing with a new environment than in the past with the nuclear campaign; people's main concern/fear is now on reliability (may overshadow concerns of radioactive waste and security). The key missing ingredient is a politically organized industry of renewables. Political strategy will have to include making voting for renewables an issue.
 - Kim: notes that the young generation is inherently cynical of most things, including nuclear power (the Simpson's generation)
 - Jen: agree with Kim re: young generation. Note that this generation (late 20's, early 30's even) did not grow up with anti-nuke campaign; not well informed of the dangers; not everyone is familiar with the anti-nuke campaign.
 - Andrew: current reports (Pembina, etc...) are not in the public domain. Need experts for journalists to quote to get the message through.
 - Tonya: 3rd Achilles heal of the nuke industry may be economics.
 - Gord: the old line was unsafe, unnecessary, uneconomic. This is still relevant. Note the proposed cost, can list the things that people won't have (ex. better education, health care, etc...) if they get new nuclear.
- b) Shawn-Patrick gave a brief overview of polling results
- In Ontario, there is a split view on building new nuclear facilities
 - Of public concerns, cost is not on the top of the list (its about eighth). Top of the list is that they're unsafe, followed by environmental concerns. Jose points out that the economics surrounding nuclear facilities seem to escape all reason, 'voodoo economics'; traditional economic arguments don't seem to apply
 - Polls show that public support for renewables increases drastically when informed that nuclear power won't come through for 10 years (Gord: support is not for nukes, it's for keeping the lights on)
 - Poll on public's view of credibility of information received: DSF high at 74%; provincial government has the least credibility; experts/scientists at the top
 - Greenpeace polling indicates that 88% of people in Ontario are against a radioactive waste site. Need a siting plan to use this public fear.
 - John: there is a gap between hope for renewables and achieving a reality because there is no organized political renewable industry
 - Tonya: need renewable success stories in a pro campaign with big industry names telling their stories
 - Gord: Robert Fung is an excellent Canadian example to use
 - Kim: the wind turbine can act as a powerful symbol, not just for renewables but in a broader realm of possibility. Jack Layton used the symbol effectively in his last campaign.
 - Theresa: provincial consultations last week showed a huge support for renewables. Government announced a new round of consultation, will be sending a pamphlet that highlights the OPA report to every household in the province. Included will be information on where the public can send written comments.

- Gord: can attempt to organize discrete groups (CAW, etc...) before the pamphlet goes out.
- Tonya: a recent poll that measured optimism/hope for the future in a general context showed that optimism is only high in urban centres (Ottawa, TO). Way to reach rural citizens may be to promote the idea that wind power puts power back into the hands of the people.
- Can we move people away from the idea that we need one big central source of power to keep the lights on. Kim: point out that this way has already failed.
- Paul: discussion thus far has been in the long-term. The McGuinty government wants to make a decision by the end of the year and will likely use the pamphlet feedback to back this decision. If McGuinty government loses next year's election, the Conservatives will just continue with the plan. Need a short term strategy to slow down the decision-making process.
- *Arrival: Brad from Green Living Communications*
- Theresa: review of timeline: Minister Cansfield said would respond to OPA report in mid-2006, will likely push this back with the pamphlet distribution but not by much. Province wants to give proposed plan to OEB for review by late 2006. October 2007 is the provincial election.
- Theresa: have attempted to slow down the decision by arguing that the government will have to do an environmental assessment of the energy plan itself. Argument has also been made that EA's will be needed for decommissioning the coal plants.

Break: 3:10 – 3:20 pm

3) Strategy

- Tonya provided a review of the meeting thus far.
- Energy Vision is a large collection of groups; need one purpose, one plan and one voice.
- Group now should create an overarching communications framework; then look at compartmentalized pieces in that strategy.
- Theresa: challenge will be to get around the divisions within the group.
- Tonya: must identify what the group agrees on and form a framework on that, then navigate the differences on a case-by-case basis. Joslyn: concern re case-by-case basis. May be timely and produce inconsistencies in the message.
- *Arrival: Chris Winter, Conservation Council*
- Areas of consensus (all agree): no nukes, conservation/efficiency, pursue clean green renewables, and that the government approval process is bad. Almost complete agreement re no coal (minority view of green coal; more anti-subsidy view)
- Keep message simple; more likely that all groups will stay on message.
- Brad: The government has been caught off guard by the public support for renewables and are on the run. Group should focus and capitalize on this. The key is

that the public is not for nukes, they just need to be shown the alternative. Key: how to bolster public opinion that alternatives are viable. Support for nukes is not growing b/c of nuke ads, its growing b/c of fear of reliability.

- Gord: re short term strategy, need to tie the government up until after the election. May do this by promoting local fights.
- Shawn-Patrick: long-term plan with a focus on reliability is needed.
- Paul: goal should be to delay the decision (consensus on this). There is a credibility issue that environment groups have to face – government will argue that they appeased the groups by getting rid of coal and are now put in a box if they can't do nuclear. Government needs to be given a reason or a scapegoat to delay the decision
- Brad: Exploit that power is secure until 2013 (per OPA report). Must create breathing space for government to delay the decision.
- *Paul left the meeting at this point.*
- Charts created:

Short Term Goals

- continue the pressure
- slow the process
- delay the decision
- let's try renewables
- create space for decision
- short term audience: political

Long Term Goals

- present alternatives
- bolster opinion that alternatives will work
- power until 2013
- let's try renewables
- long term audience: public

- John: tactic may be to focus on local action, get constituents to bring message to key MPP's who will then bring the message back to the government

Messages

- the conservation movement is growing
- don't give away the renewables future
- don't block renewables
- make it a fight between nukes and renewables
- efficiency
- prosperity = efficiency
- where is the \$ for nukes coming from?
- renewables are faster
- people will invest their own \$ in efficiency if you let them

Phases of Plan

- 1) Know what we want

- 2) Galvanizing the public
- 3) Be ready with an alternative

Tactics

- local action
- Brian: Premier on record that renewables are good; make the OPA take the fall for pushing nuclear. Present it so that the choice is up the Premier.
- Gord: The OPA ultimately will make the decision, not the Premier. Focus on delaying the decision so there is time to get groups on the ground
- Brad: won't get a delay unless you have an impact on the Premier and the people around him. The political reality is that if the lights flicker in Ontario, the Liberals are out for the next four elections.
- Jose: 3 areas of focus: 1) efficiency 2) create public benefit fund (Gord and Theresa in consensus that this would never happen. 3) standard offer contracts
- Theresa: general consensus not to attack McGuinty but try to reach him and in that context, give him an out. Will have to get to him through the public with three messages:
 - 1) Don't do anything to jeopardize our renewables future
 - 2) Give us the tools to do efficiency
 - 3) Nuclear is a money pit
 - 4) Ask why nukes over renewables?
- Chris: added 3 key messages
 - 1) public wants conservation; give us a chance (Joslyn: concern that this is the wrong message, not concrete enough. Must paint a concrete picture of real solutions)
 - 2) we need your support to make it work
 - 3) what happens if renewables aren't enough (must be prepared to give a back-up, ex. gas is given in the Pembina report)
- Tonya: reports don't translate into action, question is how to make the information they provide accessible. Possibility: make toolkits of the reports and provide them to narrow groups
- Tonya: most effective communications strategy right now is stories. Stories of what is possible need to be told; people want to believe in renewables.
- Gord (the 3 P's)
 - 1) Persuasion
 - o this ground has already been won; the public wants renewables (Andrew disagrees with this point; public has not yet been persuaded)
 - 2) Planning
 - o will never win on this
 - 3) Power
 - o Essentially, it's a power battle (against industry).
 - o Real question is how to empower people
- Tonya: Messaging and Organizing Issue

- Theresa: recall the government's original message was to phase out coal and focus on renewables and efficiency thus they can't say that ENGO's are putting them in a box. Focus can be on asking them to deliver on the second element of their promise.
- Jose: need to tighten up the financial numbers used in the message (refer to the overall \$85 billion plan, the \$40 billion on nuclear?)

4) Concluding Remarks and Follow Up

- Tonya: no clear plan, but have the ingredients to make one
- steps to move forward: present group to create plan and bring it to the experts
- timing: need to address the pamphlet (already available online; likely in the mail this week)
- Health Institutions that are anti-nuke: OCFP, OPHA, Toronto Medical Officer of Health
- Joslyn, Gord, and Andrew are to meet this week and develop a communications strategy and sent out to the rest of the group

Meeting Concluded at 5:00 pm