

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The government should maintain an on-line database of peer-reviewed scientific studies and responsible non-partisan journalism concerning climate change that is available to the public and the press. Articles should have a brief abstract to explain the studies to a general audience.

The link to this site should be sent to, and advertised on, social media like Facebook and Twitter, and used internally, so that everyone is discussing the same 'facts.'

The people must all be exposed to the same 'facts' – this cannot become an issue debated on opinion pages or spun on competing websites often run by vested interests.

In the shale gas campaign, we collected and distributed the science ourselves for many years, but as an advocacy group, we could be cast as prejudiced, even though we were quoting the science. However, two groups of professionals and experts put together collections of all the peer-reviewed literature.

Examples: The Concerned Health Professionals of New York put together a Compendium, which can be viewed or downloaded at:

<http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>

It is arranged by topic, with most recent papers first, and contains a short, readable abstract of each paper.

Physicians, Scientists and Engineers for Healthy Energy maintains a citation database online, arranged by topic and with online tools to search and manage the

data. <http://www.psehealthyenergy.org/site/view/1180>

Both of these provide good examples. Had such a neutral database existed for shale gas, that issue would not have dragged on for so many years. Once we were able to take advantage of these sites it became much easier to direct people and the press to actual news and developments.

The government cannot wait and hope that the non-profit sector will fill this gap. Plus, the government itself should use this resource and direct its internal departments to it for keeping current on climate issues that affect them.

Recommendation 2

The government should consider outreach to explain its plans and policies and the reasons for them.

The current town halls and committees such as this are great for learning how the public feels, but the participants are by nature those who have actively investigated the issue on their own.

Having the facts is necessary, but to convince, the facts must be fed to the people. This we also learned from shale gas. People may be interested in the topic, but not have the time or resources or knowledge to access the information they need. We did educational tours around the province to give people the basics and to direct them to additional sources.

The government could do this to much better effect than we did, as we had the disadvantage of having few financial resources and being an 'advocacy' group our views could be seen as prejudiced.

At some point the government must lead to persuade the general population. NGO's could be a vital resource and I am certain they would help, but the information must be seen as impartial.

Recommendation 3

The government cannot be the source of cognitive dissonance nor send conflicting messages to the public.

The guiding principle that, "*Sustainable development of New Brunswick's energy and resource sectors is of key importance in making the transition to a low-carbon economy,*" must be clarified, or changed to exclude the extraction, expansion or enablement of unconventional oil and gas, or be removed as a principle.

Any government that decides to create infrastructure for the dirtiest of fossil fuels – infrastructure that will cost billions and be designed to last decades – cannot at the same time claim to be fighting climate change. The countries that attempt to do both - the US, Canada, Australia – are those whose populations remain the most sceptical about climate change.

Populations will not believe that the climate situation is serious or dire, and will not support climate change policies calling on them for change or sacrifice. Any climate action will be perceived as simply a bone

Presentation to the Select Committee on Climate Change
by Jim Emberger, *Spokesperson, New Brunswick Anti-Shale Gas Alliance*

thrown to environmentalists, while with a wink and a nod it will be perceived as business as usual with the fossil fuel industry. The general population will tune out of the issue, and the informed population will lose trust in the government.

Recommendation 4

"Requiring that future climate impacts be considered as part of public funding decisions for roads, buildings and other infrastructure,"
(Discussion Guide)
is sound policy, but does not go far enough.

Climate change will affect everything – agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, tourism, public health, the list goes on.

An office in government should be created, with the sole responsibility for overseeing the coordination of the province's transition to a clean energy world, and to examine all climate change considerations.

Each ministry should, of course, assess its own interests relative to climate change. And, of course, there are other issues of importance that must be considered. But they must not be addressed in silos. If ever there was an issue that has to be coordinated across all levels of government, this is it.

Political figures inside the government in the US are recommending a climate change office in a structure modeled on the National Security Council.