

Presentation to the New Brunswick Select Committee on Climate Change
August 30, 2016

Introduction

My name is Joe Waugh. I have worked as a contractor and energy efficiency consultant specializing in new construction and renovation since the late 1970's. My company was one of the first group of R2000 builders in the province, winning a national award in 2004 for the most energy efficient R2000 house of the year. In my consulting role I have provided professional energy modeling services and building testing for many builders and have delivered training on a wide range of housing topics throughout the Maritime Provinces and across the country. My training delivery includes sessions on all of the Natural Resources Canada housing programs, a number of CMHC housing programs including being a member of CMHC's International Training Team and training development and delivery for the Atlantic Home Warranty Program. I have been a long time member of the Canadian Home Builders Association, including representing NB as Chair of the national Technical Research Committee. I have also worked on a number of national committees including the advisory committee on the current National Building code.

In 2006 I was recruited as the Senior Residential Energy Advisor at the time of the creation of Efficiency NB and in that role I was involved in the development and management of the ENB's housing programs. I stayed in that role for the life of the Agency and last year moved back to private practice and semi retirement.

Position

My experience leads me to conclude that it is critical to have a permanent provincial conservation and energy efficiency agency to promote greater energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in residential, commercial and institutional buildings.

This type of agency would deliver programs to aid in the transition toward greater energy efficiency and work with other partners to develop expertise in the wide range of technologies to meet this goal. Though we currently have building codes and standards that address set energy efficient for buildings, these codes are far lower than the efficiency levels that we are capable of achieving.

There has long been a debate as to whether bring about change by implementing higher mandatory standards thereby imposing additional initial capital costs on property owners or whether to continue as we have with voluntary programs. Whether we pick one path or the other or a combination of the two, there is a need for a central agency to help develop partnerships and facilitate change.

The challenge faced when trying to achieve significant greenhouse gas reduction in this sector is, for the most part, not technical. Programs such as the national R-2000 program and EnerGuide for Houses and New Brunswick's Efficiency NB programs have all lead to the improvement of the energy efficiency of housing and brought other benefits for the housing industry. The intermittent government support for

these programs has been a waste of both human and financial resources and set back achieving continued GHG and energy use reduction.

As all of us that manage our household budgets know that money spent on energy is money wasted. Money spent on conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy is truly an investment, resulting in both immediate and long term returns. These actions not only reduce GHG generation but also provide ongoing economic benefits through the creation and support of skilled jobs and reduced energy costs.

I have reviewed Nova Scotia's Efficiency One excellent presentation made to this committee in July. Their experience mirrors the successes of Efficiency NB over the years that it was well funded and offered programs for all sectors.

Brief History of Energy Efficient Housing in Canada

Today's climate change crisis reminds me in some ways of the 1970's energy crisis that spawned many of the efforts that we are still working on today. A critical difference between the 1970's oil shock and today's climate crisis is that the earlier energy crisis was sudden and effected everyone through immediate price increases, oil shortages in some countries and a long term economic crisis. Most sectors of the economy quickly started to look for alternative to high cost oil as OPEC caused the price of oil to quadruple in a matter of months and held the West at ransom for years thereafter.

As Canada responded to the crisis we discovered that much research had been already been done on housing efficiency through our various research bodies. Let me take a few minutes to give you an overview of where we have and why we need to continue to support incentive programs, provide resources and work with industry to achieve a lower energy future.

Power Point Presentation

Conclusion

Improvements to the energy efficiency of new and existing housing stock need to be consistently supported and promoted by a government funded agency that provides programs for all housing sectors including new and existing housing, affordable housing and assistance to low income homeowners and renters.

Programs such as the national R-2000 program and EnerGuide for Houses and New Brunswick's Efficiency NB programs have all had significant benefits to the housing industry and improvement of the energy efficiency of housing. The intermittent government support for these programs has been a waste of resources and set back achieving carbon and energy use reduction.

Though much progress was made between 1981 and the 2015 adoption of the current National Building Code, possibly as many as 100,000 new dwelling units were built in New Brunswick in that period,

many of which did not meet the higher energy efficiency standards of the voluntary programs. Ironically many of these relatively new homes have since been renovated to bring them up to a standard that was readily achievable at the time they were first built

Increased measures to improve the energy efficiency of commercial and institutional buildings also need to be implemented in order to help restructure the nature of energy use in that sector.

Support of these types of initiatives provides consistency of messaging for industry, students coming into the energy field and the public who is trying to make sense of the many diverse choices and sources of information available.

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