



**New voices weigh in on the green economy
*Two reports point the way for Canada***

Toronto, ON. Wednesday, June 22, 2011. Two new reports were issued today that identify the roadblocks to building a green economy in Canada and what needs to be done to tap into the global opportunities the country, so far, has failed to embrace. The companion papers titled: *Building Bridges: The Environment and the Economy* were commissioned by the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network (CEGN), a membership group of more than 60 private and public funders.

"While the green economy is certainly a hot topic in international circles, we want to bring the issues closer to Canadians while also investigating a role for us as individual grantmakers," says Allan Northcott, Chair of CEGN. "Some of our members are already doing pioneering work in this area that we can learn from."

The reports pinpoint what's preventing us from moving forward and present a persuasive and plain language argument for transforming our economy. "Our basic economic assumptions must be challenged," says Alexander Wood of Sustainable Prosperity, Canada's leading green economy think tank founded with the support of private philanthropy, and the author of the first report. "We believe, as Canadians, that natural resources are plentiful and cheap, and are betting our economic future on it. But the rest of the world is figuring out that advantage will come to those economies that are able to do more with less. And in that world, Canada is right now not able to compete. We need to engage citizens in an informed debate about how we will generate wealth in Canada, and the steps we need to take us to a greener, stronger, and more competitive economy."

The second report, written by Tyler Hamilton, is a compilation of perspectives and advice from thought leaders across sectors and across the country. Over and above the economic rationale, Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations points out that greening the economy will reconnect individuals to the environment and empower local communities to collaborate more closely thereby mending past relations with Canada's aboriginal peoples, particularly youth. Specific strategies are also tabled:

- Michael Brown, Chairman of Chrysalix Energy Venture Capital in British Columbia emphasizes the need for citizen engagement in order to both change behaviours and raise the issue on the public agenda. He posits the concept of a "climate observation" database that tracks changes in the Canadian climate through the observations of the public;
- Preston Manning, Founder, President and CEO of the Manning Centre for Building Democracy based in Alberta underlines the need for full-cost accounting of the energy and resource inputs that go into our consumption;

- Michael de Pencier, Co-Founder of Ontario's Investeco advocates educating the business community, particularly pension funds, about the enormous investment opportunities in a green economy.

Both reports make clear that the philanthropic community has a critical role to play in building up the knowledge base, institutions, and capacity that Canada will need to get us to a green economy. The first report highlights some innovative approaches already underway.

They also provide direction for business and government. At the top of the recommendations is a call for a national multi-stakeholder dialogue to jumpstart a federal strategy. While not a new idea – many before have made the same recommendation – it is hoped that the nonpartisan collective influence of philanthropy can be a catalyst for change.

Building Bridges Thought Leaders

Shawn Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (B.C.)

Michael Brown, Chairman of Chrysalix Energy Venture Capital (B.C.)

Michael de Pencier, Chair of Key Publishers/Co-founder of Investeco (Ontario)

Don Drummond, former Chief Economist of TD Bank Financial Group (Ontario)

Johanne Gelin, Partner at Deloitte/former federal Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (Quebec)

David Keith, Professor of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering at the University of Calgary (Alberta)

Jacques Lamarre, former President and CEO of SNC-Lavalin Group Inc. (Quebec)

Preston Manning, Founder, President and CEO of the Manning Centre for Building Democracy (Alberta)

Marlo Reynolds, Senior Advisor, Pembina Institute (Alberta)

Don Roberts, Vice-Chairman of Renewable Energy and Clean Technology at CIBC World Markets (Ontario)

Jim Stanford, Economist with Canadian Auto Workers union (Ontario)

Alexander Wood, Senior Director, Policy and Markets, Sustainable Prosperity (Ontario)

To download the reports go to: www.cegn.org or www.sustainableprosperity.ca

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