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January 19, 2016

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
107 Catherine Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister McKenna,

On behalf of the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative (OREC), I wish to congratulate you on the signing of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and your government's constructive engagement in the negotiations.

I also appreciate your call for massive investment in clean energy by government and the private sector so that Canada can meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement. Investment by ordinary citizens through co-operatives has been shown to be a potentially huge source of capital for clean energy projects in Europe, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. OREC is a successful local model for mobilizing community capital to invest in clean energy that I believe could be replicated across Canada; I would very much appreciate the opportunity to tell you about that success and OREC's ideas on how the federal government could leverage community investment in clean energy across Canada.

OREC was founded in 2010 by 5 members and by 2016 has grown to 485 members who have invested over \$5 million in solar electricity projects in Ottawa (www.ottawarenewableenergycoop.com). The projects are installed on the roofs of schools, housing coops, industrial buildings and barns. Power from each project is sold to the grid under a 20-year Feed-in Tariff (FIT) contract under Ontario's *Green Energy Act*. Member investment has shown that there is a huge untapped potential for people to move their savings from conventional to local community investment alternatives.

The federal government could leverage community investment in clean energy by:

1. Recognizing the role that community ownership of clean energy through renewable energy co-operatives can play in tackling climate change;

2. Working with provinces and territories to harmonize regulations governing renewable energy co-ops, allowing ownership and investment in all types of clean energy projects;
3. Providing a tax credit for those who invest in solar and wind energy projects through renewable energy co-operatives, similar to current U.S. multiyear credits recently renewed in the United States;
4. Fast tracking a clean energy community investment system across Canada by providing information support and training for new renewable energy coo-ops;.
5. Using some of the proceeds raised through the sale of Green Bonds as a pool of capital to provide accessible debt financing for renewable energy co-operative projects; and
6. Giving priority to community financing and ownership for all government procurement of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

In conclusion, OREC is helping to make Ottawa a clean energy capital. With the support of you and your government, I am convinced that Ottawa can become a model for mobilizing community capital for investment in clean energy across Canada.

We very much look forward to discussing these issues with you. I will be away for the next three weeks but another member of our Executive will follow up with your constituency staff to set up a meeting at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Bakker
President

Cc:

Martin Gratton, Vice President
Stephen Michel, Secretary

Janice Ashworth, Operations Manager