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MEDIA RELEASE

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What is the impact of British Columbia's "clean energy revolution?"

As British Columbia stands on the brink of a clean energy revolution, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) announces a forum that aims to bring much-needed constructive debate over the province's future electricity regime. FutureGrid: BC's Energy Options in a Changing Environment will be held on June 15 and 16, 2010, at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver, BC.

The forum comes as the BC government grapples with one of its most controversial pieces of legislation—the Clean Energy Act—currently before the provincial legislature.

Dr. Lawrence Pitt, PICS associate director and forum organizer, says the proposed Act is sparking fierce debate over whether BC should ramp up its energy supply enough to become an electricity export heavyweight. But he says that is just part of the overall picture.

"BC has a new carbon pricing policy and probably soon, a new Clean Energy Act. FutureGrid will examine how these policy instruments interact, creating challenges and opportunities, including the prospect of BC becoming a major exporter of electricity," he says. "Other issues on the table include the role of independent power producers, the introduction of smart meters and grids into homes, changing regulations and oversight, cumulative environmental impacts from energy projects, evolving electricity markets and changing rainfall patterns in our major watersheds."

By bringing together key energy experts and opinion leaders, FutureGrid provides a platform for achieving informed consensus, clarity and policy input on these important issues, says Pitt.

The forum opens on Tuesday, June 15, by examining the real picture behind global energy use patterns and GHG emission reduction efforts, as well as the potential impact of climate change on two important river basins in BC: the Peace and the Columbia. That afternoon will be dedicated to the question of whether BC should become a major exporter of electricity, culminating in a free special public forum that night on "BC as a Clean Energy Exporting Powerhouse?" Panelists include representatives from the energy industry, the legal profession, the media, BC universities and First Nations. The event runs from 7:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the Sheraton Wall Centre, Pavilion Ballroom, 1088 Burrard Street. Media and members of the public are welcome to attend.

Pitt says the Wednesday, June 16 sessions will examine a range of energy issues—from how the design of cities affects their energy use, through to the realities of the public sector being able to meet strict new carbon neutrality requirements. For a full program of events and speakers visit <http://www.pics.uvic.ca>. Media wishing to attend the two-day forum or to interview speakers should contact PICS communications staff in advance.

PICS is a collaboration of BC's four research-intensive universities hosted and led by the University of Victoria.

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