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MEDIA RELEASE

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FutureGrid forum debates BC's energy options

What will the introduction of “smart meters” in BC Hydro customers’ homes mean in reality? Should BC become a major exporter of electricity? How will BC’s public sector meet the challenge of becoming carbon neutral? These and other critical questions facing the province will be discussed next week when Canadian and international energy and climate change experts attend the forum “**FutureGrid: BC’s Energy Options in a Changing Environment,**” hosted by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS).

Delegates representing a variety of areas of expertise and industry stakeholders will convene in Vancouver on June 15 and 16 at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue. Additionally, PICS is hosting a free, open-to-the-public-and-media panel discussion on “*BC as a clean energy exporting powerhouse?*” on Tuesday, June 15 from 7.30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the Sheraton Wall Centre, Pavilion Ballroom, 1088 Burrard Street, Vancouver.

The forum's keynote speaker on BC's new Clean Energy Act, SFU Professor Mark Jaccard, says the legislation tries to find the right balance between political control (decisions by cabinet) and independent regulatory control (oversight power of the utilities commission), but not everyone is happy as we contemplate energy investments with a price-tag approaching \$10 billion.

"With major projects pending, such as the Site C dam on the Peace River, extensions of the transmission grid and the mass replacement of meters in peoples' homes, now is the time for informed discussion on future regulatory checks and balances, on the role of independent power producers and expected market trends, and on these projects' associated environmental and social impacts," he says. "This forum provides a platform for discussion of these important issues."

Other keynote speakers include Hans Holger Rogner from the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and science policy expert Prof Roger Pielke Jr. from the University of Colorado at Boulder. They will present global greenhouse gas emission trends, including the latest Global Energy Assessment figures. Pielke's latest book, “*The Climate Fix: What Scientists and Politicians Won't Tell You About Global Warming,*” is due out this September.

Former BC premier Mike Harcourt will speak about the energy solutions behind sustainable cities and early results from the Quality Urban Energy Systems for Tomorrow (*QUEST*) project. Other speakers will provide real-life examples of smart-grids and other energy-saving technology in homes from a special case-study on the Olympic Peninsula. The predicted impact of climate change on BC's Columbia and Peace river basins—plus how BC universities are coping with new carbon neutrality requirements—will also be examined.

Media wishing to attend the two-day forum or to interview speakers should contact PICS communication staff in advance. For a full program of events and speakers visit www.pics.uvic.ca. PICS is a collaboration of BC's four research-intensive universities hosted and led by the University of Victoria.

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