
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2008OTP0011-000089
Jan. 25, 2008

Office of the Premier

B.C. TO FUND WORLD-LEADING CLIMATE RESEARCH

VANCOUVER – The Province will seek legislative approval for \$94.5 million to create the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, which will bring together top scientists, researchers, governments and the private sector to develop innovative climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“British Columbia universities have some of the top climate scientists and researchers in the world,” said Campbell. “This institute will bring together those academics, along with others from around the world, with business and the private sector to develop new policy alternatives, to find ways to educate and encourage greener lifestyles, and to develop new, green technologies into products that can be used by consumers around the globe.”

The Institute will be a unique joint collaboration between the province’s four research-intensive universities – the University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and University of Northern British Columbia – the private sector and government. It will bring provincial, national and international climate researchers together to work with governments and the private sector to develop ideas that can be applied and transferred to government, industry and the public.

Besides providing research support and developing innovative alternatives such as new energy systems, new forms of transportation, alternative technologies, and socio-behavioral change, the Institute will also provide the public with information and ideas on how to reduce individual greenhouse gas emissions through public forums, publications and online information. It will provide education, training and outreach to business leaders, government staff and non-government organizations via workshops, short courses and publications.

The Institute will be founded on four pillars: Research on climate change impacts; assessment of mitigation and adaptation options, including technology development; education and capacity building; and outreach through knowledge management and technology transfer.

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions will be hosted and the collaboration led by the University of Victoria, utilizing existing space. The proposed funding will be used to support research projects, staff salaries, graduate fellowships and internships. The endowment will ensure the Institute will operate in perpetuity.

“Linking British Columbia’s climate researchers together and with other national and international researchers will help us develop and apply knowledge to British Columbia situations,” said University of Victoria president David Turpin. “It will also ensure that research is meaningfully transferred to government, industry and the public and secure B.C.’s leadership in this important area.”

“Developing technologies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions represents not only a challenge, but an economic opportunity,” said Environment Minister Barry Penner. “We have at least 18,000 people working on leading-edge technological solutions in B.C., which we can market to the world.”

Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell said the Institute will build on existing climate research initiatives currently operating in B.C., such as the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium.

“This will serve as a linchpin for a Pacific regional network that includes key scholars from B.C.’s four research-intensive universities, major Alberta universities, and universities from Washington, California and others,” said Coell. “The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions will be a valuable resource to government and the private sector by providing access to the considerable climate change expertise found in British Columbia’s universities.”

The Institute will be governed by a consortium of British Columbia’s four research universities and will receive advice and guidance from an advisory board made up of public and private sector stakeholders.

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions’ mission will be: ‘To partner with governments, the private sector, other researchers and civil society, in order to undertake research on, monitor, and assess the potential impacts of climate change and to assess, develop and promote viable mitigation and adaptation options to better inform climate change policies and actions.’

The Institute will stimulate and promote the development and commercialization of world-leading climate change solutions and assist government and the private sector in selecting the best possible solutions to be applied to mitigation and adaptation. It will support and promote societal change and use the synergies of a broad collaboration to leverage funding coming into the province. The Institute will also be a key partner in providing education and training opportunities for graduate students, both in British Columbia and globally.

British Columbia is legally mandated to reduce B.C. greenhouse gases by 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020; reduce emissions by at least 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050; and make all provincial government operations carbon-neutral by 2010.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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