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**MEDIA RELEASE**  
Mar. 28, 2012

## **Report urges a coordinated approach to renewable energy development in BC**

Impending expansion of renewable energy projects in BC will require a concerted effort by the province to protect both ecosystems and public interests, according to a report from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS).

In the PICS White Paper—*Scaling-Up Renewable Electricity in BC: Tackling the Institutional and Political Challenges*—co-authors Mark Jaccard, Noel Melton and John Nyboer warn that a major challenge faces the province. They examine the implications of BC’s goal to meet 93 per cent of future electricity demands from clean energy sources in order to mitigate climate change, a decision that will result in a rapid scale-up of renewable projects throughout the province, including multiple hydro initiatives.

The key decision facing the province is whether to combine a rapid increase in small-scale, run-of-river (RoR) projects with the concurrent development of the Site C megaproject, or to pursue an even more rapid scale-up of RoRs without Site C – the latter option of which will likely result in more significant cumulative effects.

“There’s a lot of inconsistency in the way costs and benefits of renewable projects are distributed,” states lead author Jaccard. “Decisions about how and where to site multiple hydro initiatives will be difficult, and choices controversial. No matter what, there will be individuals and interest groups who will be unhappy with the social or environmental implications of a given project or series of projects.”

However, Jaccard states, there will also be opportunities for BC to show leadership in establishing institutional arrangements and decision-making processes that could become models for other jurisdictions that face similar challenges as they scale-up their renewable energy sectors. “Policy-makers need to look at the big picture to meet the province’s goal of mitigating climate change and minimize harm to the BC environment.”

The report makes three recommendations:

1. Assess the cumulative effects of renewable electricity generation in BC, particularly run-of-river.
2. Develop a coordinated and integrated approach to environmental assessment and electricity planning and regulation in the province.
3. Communicate to the BC public about the related challenges of mitigating climate change and the effects of renewable electricity development.

The full report can be read at [http://pics.uvic.ca/white\\_papers.php](http://pics.uvic.ca/white_papers.php). PICS is a collaboration of BC’s four-research intensive universities, and is hosted and led by the University of Victoria.

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