



WINTER 2010

From the Director



Canada is increasingly offside with many segments of the global community in dealing with the challenge of climate change, and nowhere was that more evident than at the recent Copenhagen Summit.

Indeed, many Canadians are frustrated that the COP15 process did not result in an effective global agreement to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic climate damage. But it's not all bad news. Some analysts have suggested that there has been a tipping point in the global politics of climate change, and that climate policy as an international instrument for environmental cooperation has finally come of age.

The negotiations at Copenhagen were so contentious precisely because so much was at stake, and the world's top leaders realized this, some perhaps for the first time. There is a growing consensus that the intersection of environmental and economic policies need not result in economic duress, but instead pose an unprecedented international opportunity. Spurred on by new technologies and a newly emerging vision for international environmental cooperation, COP15 may eventually be seen as the point when the world finally woke up to the need to secure our future sustainability and prosperity.

The Copenhagen summit was also perhaps the first time that the world's emerging economies started to flex their muscles. Even if you disagree with them, the direct engagement of important countries such as China, India and Brazil in the international diplomatic process was a significant and pragmatic development. And although their off-to-the-side involvement in decision-making with other leading emitter nations may be seen by some as undemocratic, it may also be the only way to get things done. Having the right people at the right time sitting around the right table focused on the right topic can be a recipe for progress.

The imperative that the global community must work collectively and quickly to avoid dangerous

climate change is underlain by a rapidly growing competitive dynamic: Who will lead the next global industrial revolution? Who will be the frontrunners in the provision of clean energy and associated technologies? Those countries that move quickly to seize the initiative in developing technologies to exploit wind, solar, tidal, wave, biomass or geothermal energy sources will see entire new industries erupt. Canada, with its skilled population, entrepreneurial spirit and abundant resources, should be in the forefront.

But right now, we're not. Our investment in cleantech pales in comparison with our neighbour to the south and competing nations in Asia and Europe. By some estimates, on a per capita basis we are being outinvested several times by the United States. We cannot afford such slippage. We must turn the misguided perception that severe emissions reductions impose a fiscal penalty toward the realization that reductions – put in place either by carbon pricing or imposed emissions caps – stimulate innovation, employment and economic diversification. That has been the universal experience in Europe, as Professor Paul Ekins of the UK's Green Fiscal Commission made abundantly clear in his recent visit to PICS (see Paul Ekins article in this edition for more information about his BC visit).

Although Copenhagen was not the success that the world anticipated, there can be little doubt that the nations of the world will begin to work more vigorously to curb their carbon emissions. For many, how quickly, and by how much, remain open questions. But such uncertainties are no reason to procrastinate. Canada, in particular, needs to stop jeopardizing its economic future by falling further behind.

At PICS, we are working towards understanding barriers and impediments that are delaying Canadian participation in the next industrial revolution. We're asking hard questions: Why is venture capital for cleantech innovation so hard to come by in British Columbia? How should we structure our electrical grid to allow us to accommodate future wind power? What impact will electric vehicles have on demand for power?

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How can we best encourage change, given human psychological aversion to going off in new directions? Such questions look to the future, but we're also dealing with the present, with the need to adapt to the climate change that's already upon us and will be for centuries, even if COP16 is a success. Adaptation will be the subject of the next newsletter, so please do stay tuned.

Paul Ekins' visit and the key to a greener, stronger economy

On January 11 and 12, PICS hosted the BC leg of the Canadian visit of the prominent UK academic Paul Ekins, a world authority on environmental tax policy and head of the UK Green Fiscal Commission. The commission's recent final report found that green fiscal reform is a crucial policy to get the UK on a low-carbon trajectory, help develop the new industries that will both keep it there and provide competitive advantages for the UK in the future and contribute to restoring fiscal stability after the recession. Dr. Ekins' BC itinerary included meetings with BC policy and business leaders, the Climate Action Secretariat, senior government officials, cabinet ministers and the media and a lecture at UVic. After the lecture, PICS hosted a reception at UVic's Legacy Art Gallery in downtown Victoria which was well attended by many of PICS' key partners, including the business community and members of the Victoria Chamber of Commerce.



January 11, 2010: Dr. Paul Ekins delivering a lecture at UVic entitled "Smart Tax Reform: The Key to a Greener, Stronger Economy".

After meetings with the BC Business Council and the Vancouver Sun editorial board, columnist Don Cayo commented on Paul Ekins' visit and agreed with his assertions that a carbon tax is superior to cap and trade because if done right, it provides certainty in carbon pricing for business while eliminating the costly bureaucracy required to monitor and respond to a cap and trade system. Dr. Ekins also travelled to Ontario and addressed the Empire Club of Canada where he delivered a presentation on Smart Tax Reform: The Key to a Greener, Stronger Economy. Dr. Ekins told the Globe and Mail editorial board that a carbon tax

is an extremely effective means of shifting to a green economy and Canada should follow this route if it wants to compete in environmental technologies. A tax that sets a specific cost for generating carbon "sends an appropriate signal right through the economy" said Dr. Ekins.



January 11, 2010: PICS Associate Director Lawrence Pitt (left) and Dr. Paul Ekins (right) at Victoria's Legacy Art Gallery after delivering a short talk on green tax reform.

A copy of Dr. Ekins' presentation on smart tax reform is available on the PICS website at www.pics.uvic.ca/broadcast.php. For a recording of the UVic lecture, please contact pics@uvic.ca.

Four new fellowships to spearhead emissions reductions, promote renewable energy and tackle climate change

PICS is pleased to announce and welcome five new recipients of its prestigious fellowship awards. The new fellowships will spur climate change innovation, mitigation and adaptation.

The recipients are:

Adam Bumpus, Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Sustainability and Social Innovation, Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia. *Summary of Research:* British Columbia's carbon tax and the wider carbon policy landscape: business action, evolution and equity.

Sonja Klinsky, Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia. *Summary of Research:* Justice in the Negotiation and Implementation of Emission Trading: Leveraging Lessons for the Western Climate Initiative.

Tara Moreau, Postdoctoral Fellow, Design Center for Sustainability, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of British Columbia. *Summary of Research:* Sustainable agricultural systems for the 21st Century: integrating

urban and peri-urban agriculture with human settlement to minimize GHG production and maximize carbon sequestration.

Olaf Schroth, Postdoctoral Fellow, Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP), Department of Forest Resource Management, University of British Columbia. *Summary of Research: Energy landscapes – Social acceptance of different renewable energy options.*

Dan Wang, Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic), Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Victoria. *Summary of Research: Modeling and comparative analysis of expanded power generation in BC: large scale centralized systems vs. distributed generation systems.*

Since 2008, PICS has awarded a total of 26 fellowships and over \$1 million in funding to pursue research on a broad spectrum of climate change related topics across disciplines and from PICS partner institutions. PICS Director Tom Pedersen said, “tackling climate change effectively requires a foundation of solid science and research. As the world shifts from a carbon intensive model to a low carbon economy, PICS researchers are contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation in British Columbia.”

PICS fellowships are valued at \$12,000 a year for Master’s students, \$18,000 a year for PhD students, and \$50,000 a year for postdoctoral fellows. Welcome to Adam, Sonja, Tara, Olaf and Dan as the newest members of the PICS fellowship team.

Resilient Ecosystems Workshop



December 7, 2009: Dr. Eric Higgs kicks off discussions on PICS’ Resilient Ecosystems theme on day one of the workshop.

On December 7 and 8, 2009, PICS hosted a major workshop on Resilient Ecosystems led by Dr. Eric Higgs, Professor and Director of UVic’s School of Environmental Studies. The workshop brought together over thirty scientists and policy experts from BC and beyond and offered the opportunity to contribute to a new research agenda that will position British Columbia as a leader in solutions-oriented climate change research.

Against the background of the recent Copenhagen Summit, an event that was on front pages around the world, the Resilient Ecosystems workshop discussions centered on many key ecosystems issues and identified possible areas for research that would make major contributions to understanding and responding to climate change.

The Resilient Ecosystems research theme is one of four being developed by PICS, the others include: The Low Carbon Emissions Economy, Sustainable Communities, and Social Mobilization.

PICS Director Dr. Tom Pedersen opened the workshop by providing background information on the Institute, the BC policy framework and the current understanding of climate change. Three external specialists were invited to give presentations that brought valuable outside perspectives to the workshop: Dr. Richard Hobbs, University of Western Australia; Dr. Erika Zavaleta, University of California; and Dr. Fikret Berkes, University of Manitoba.

Dr. Higgs is now drawing on the workshop discussions to develop a research agenda that will assist PICS in allocating funding resources under a Resilient Ecosystems theme that is distinctive, policy-oriented, and relevant to BC.

The draft workshop report was used to help shape the current call for PICS postgraduate fellowships released in early February, and the workshop has already stimulated interdisciplinary collaboration across government and academia in BC.

Pacific Climate Seminar Series

The Pacific Climate Seminar Series, co-hosted by PICS and the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC) continues to attract enthusiastic audiences and top notch speakers. The monthly lecture series takes place at UVic, but is webcast live on the PICS website.

Over the past few months, speakers and topics have included: Dr. Eric Higgs on "Resilience, Novelty and the Future of BC Ecosystems" and Dr. Richard Hobbs on "Novel Ecosystems and No-analogue Climates." Our most recent speaker was Ben Kangasniemi, Acting Head of Science and Adaptation at BC's Climate Action Secretariat, who discussed British Columbia's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, now available online at http://www.livesmartbc.ca/attachments/Adaptation_Strategy.pdf.

All presentation notes and a full recording of each webcast are available for downloading on the PICS website or by contacting pics@uvic.ca.

UBC's New Sustainability Initiative

Congratulations to Dr. John Robinson from UBC's Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, who will be assuming the role of UBC's Executive Director, Sustainability. UBC has recently announced the creation of a new sustainability strategic management initiative.

This initiative will consist of three offices, which will work together in a highly collaborative and integrated way: Operational Sustainability (The UBC Sustainability Office, which is responsible for the wide array of operational programs already in place), Academic Programs (responsible for working with existing programs across campus to develop and facilitate a new suite of sustainability teaching and learning options), and Research and Partnerships (responsible for fostering new forms of collaborative interdisciplinary research, and partnerships with the private, public and NGO sectors).

When it opens in spring 2011, UBC's new Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS) building will be the home to this initiative. More info at: www.cirs.ubc.ca.

FutureGrid - Save the Date!

BC's Energy Options in a Changing Environment

June 14-16, 2010 | Wosk Centre for Dialogue, Vancouver BC

How is a modern carbon-constrained energy system going to shape British Columbia's energy future? How will changing climate regimes, low carbon emission constraints, technological advances, the cost of new infrastructure, rising energy demands, market restructuring and NIMBYism challenge the province's strategists, policy-makers, resource managers and end users? PICS is devoting its annual forum to finding answers to these and other questions. At FutureGrid, participants will take a critical look at BC's energy options from global, continental, regional and local perspectives.

Climate Change and the Media

Scientists, Scribes and Spinmeisters

Thursday, April 8th, 7:30 – 9:30pm in the Bob Wright Centre, Room B150, University of Victoria

You are invited to this free panel discussion designed to inform the community about the facts on climate change and the challenges facing media in reporting them. Save the date now and join panelists Lucinda Chodan, Editor-in-Chief, Times Colonist, Peter Calamai, Science Writer, Toronto Star, Tom Pedersen, PICS Director, and Jim Hoggan, co-author of the bestseller Climate Cover-Up live on stage at UVic. Please arrive early as seating is limited.

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