



Technology and public transit featured in latest provincial climate change action

August 12, 2008 eConnecting

In July Premier Stelmach committed \$4 billion of this year's surplus to implement carbon capture and storage, and expand public transit, as the next phase of Alberta's climate change action.

"The Chamber sees greenhouse gas reduction, and strategies to transition Alberta's economy from 'carbon intensive' to 'carbon smart', as two of our province's highest priorities," said Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs, at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. "As environment and economy are now inextricably linked, we need make the investments that help achieve these goals in a cost effective manner that does not undermine our current and future standard of living."

"In doing so, our province can develop the technology, advantage and 'know how' to safely reduce emissions from carbon processing, and seize exciting business opportunities around the world as other countries look to reduce their carbon footprint."

Building momentum for the transformation will require a massive investment in technology and infrastructure, and the Chamber has consistently recommended the creation of a new \$5 billion Research in Energy Futures Innovation and Technology (REFIT) endowment fund.

"The province is facing its biggest technology challenge since the Alberta Oil Sands Technology Research Authority (AOSTRA) was created to make the oilsands a reality. It's therefore time for investment in the next great technology research drive," said Pradella. "The \$2 billion carbon capture and storage (CCS) announcement is an important element."

The new provincial funding will help kick start CCS, one of the most promising emerging technologies.

CCS reduces greenhouse gas emissions by permanently injecting and storing them in deep underground formations. The technology is supported as safe and viable by groups including the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency. CCS has been used for many decades for enhanced oil recovery in Weyburn, Saskatchewan and in Texas, among other jurisdictions.

Another key element of the province's transformation from 'carbon intensive' to 'carbon smart' is intelligent land use design and transportation.

"As part of our Renaissance Calgary vision, we have stressed the need for a world-leading public transit system and the importance of planning on a regional basis," said Geoff Pradella. "This funding is an important first step."

The Chamber also strongly agrees with the provincial government that it must do everything it can to oppose a cap-and-trade program, where money is effectively shipped to other jurisdictions to purchase offsets.



"The funds required for the transformation of our economy are considerable, and it only makes sense for that money to be invested in the province, and in the industry where the carbon and emissions challenges are based," said Pradella. "It's simple logic, really, to insist that the money follow the carbon, assuming that the carbon is the challenge we're working to successfully manage."