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Smart meters should come last, say BC Greens

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On Wednesday, July 27, BC Green Party Leader Jane Sterk held a press conference at the Martin Batchelor Gallery in Victoria to announce the BC Green Party position that electricity measures such as feed-in tariffs, time-of-day pricing, conservation incentives, programs to make homes and buildings more energy efficient, and a distributed grid should all be in place before the selection and installation of a metering system.

A Smart Grid is what is needed, rather than smart meters, Sterk says, 'There are all kinds of things we can do before we go to a technology with very little benefit.'

Sterk says that designing a BC Smart Grid with regional power self-sufficiency, public consultation and BCUC oversight should come first (BCUC oversight has been side-stepped by the *Clean Energy Act*.)

She commented that BC Hydro said it will not implement the two main conservation possibilities that smart meters introduce: time-of-day billing and feed-in tariffs.

A Smart Grid design should be so attractive that people will want to opt-in to a smart metering program, she says. When it comes to metering, Sterk advocates wired smart meters and called for the cancellation of the wireless meter program. 'The technology is pushing the agenda,' she commented.

Sterk was joined by Magda Havas, Associate Professor of Environment and Resource Studies at Trent University. Havas' research focuses on the biological effects of electromagnetic pollution. Havas also said wired technology should be used wherever possible, reserving wireless for those situations where it was the only solution.

Green Party of Canada Leader Elizabeth May (MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands) was also at the press conference. She commented that: 'The Green Party of Canada, through a resolution of our entire membership, has called for the current inadequate Health Canada regulations to

be upgraded to the equivalent of the EMF regulations in Germany. We are entirely too complacent about the growing evidence of health effects from wireless technology.'

Sterk said, 'BC Hydro's wireless smart meter program violates the precautionary principle. There are environmental, privacy and security concerns as well as the potential for adverse health risks. This is an issue that hits at the heart of democratic rights. Individuals have no ability to opt out of a program that may impact the health of those with electro-magnetic sensitivity.'

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