

## CanWEA 2017 – President Robert Hornung’s Day One Opening Address

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**Montreal, Quebec, October 3, 2017** – Please find below the text of the opening address delivered by the President of the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA), Robert Hornung, on the first day of this year’s [CanWEA 2017](#) (check against delivery).

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My name is Robert Hornung and I’m the President of the Canadian Wind Energy Association.

Our conference theme this year is the Energy Transition and, like Cory, I think it is very appropriate that we are back in Montreal to explore and discuss the future evolution of the electricity sector and what it means for the wind energy industry in the face of the challenge of climate change.

Le Québec sait fort bien qu’en matière d’énergie, le passé n’est pas garant du futur.

Quebec recognizes that the future will not look like the past.

Its new Energy Policy identifies emerging new domestic and export markets for clean electricity and includes a goal to increase renewable energy production in the province by 25 per cent by 2030 to respond to those opportunities. Hydro-Quebec’s response to the recent Call for Clean Energy in Massachusetts included blended bids of wind energy and hydroelectricity for the first time. And perhaps the most significant signal of an emerging Energy Transition in Quebec was Premier Couillard’s statement two weeks ago in New York that the era of building new large hydroelectric dams is over and that there are now more cost-competitive ways to produce clean electricity.

I couldn’t agree more. As the most cost-competitive form of climate friendly electricity generation available in Canada today, wind energy is poised to play a critical role in Canada’s transition to a low carbon economy.

Et les Québécois le réalisent très bien. Un récent sondage Léger mandaté par CanWEA démontre qu’une majorité de Québécois sont d’avis que l’énergie éolienne aura un rôle à jouer dans la transition des énergies fossiles vers les énergies renouvelables. Cela n’est sûrement pas étranger avec le fait que 78 pour cent d’entre eux se disent plutôt favorables au développement de parcs éoliens dans la province.

A recent Léger public opinion poll commissioned by CanWEA demonstrates that a majority of people in Quebec believe that wind energy will have a role to play in the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Seventy-eight per cent of those polled said they are in favor of the development of wind farms in the province.

## CanWEA 2017

### President Robert Hornung's Day One Opening Address

The Energy Transition is not, however, simply a description of future changes that will occur in response to climate change. In reality, the Energy Transition is already well underway. It is a product of technological changes that have already begun to rapidly and dramatically transform the way we generate, use, transport and store electricity.

Just think about how much Canada's electricity system has changed in recent years. Our electricity supply mix has diversified. When I joined CanWEA in 2003, we only had 322 megawatts installed in Canada, 104 MW of that capacity here in Quebec. Now we're 8<sup>th</sup> in the world for installed capacity with over 12,000 MW. The hard work of our industry to bring down costs has made wind energy the largest source of new electricity generation in Canada over the past decade and our costs are poised to continue to decline in the years ahead.

The number of players in our industry has also increased. While Crown Utilities continue to play a dominant role in Canada's electricity system, the last decade has seen a massive increase in the number of independent power producers powering the grid, from large multinational corporations to homeowners with solar panels on their roofs. This growing diversity in electricity production is making our grids more complex, but also more resilient and more reliable.

Advances in information technology have introduced the concept of the smart grid – enhancing efficiency and increasing flexibility within the system.

Finally, while we still have some work to do to improve energy literacy among Canadians, there is no doubt that Canadians are taking a much more active interest in energy development. As a result, we've also seen significant challenges emerge for all forms of energy with respect to social acceptance – making responsible and effective community engagement a key component of any project.

There have been many other important changes in our electricity systems over the past decade – and the growing public awareness of, and government action related to, climate change is one of them. While concerns over climate change have not been responsible for the Energy Transition, it is a serious commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that will require us to dramatically accelerate it.

Prior to coming to CanWEA, I worked on the climate change issue, both within the environmental community and in government, for more than a decade. To be honest, I often felt like I was simply banging my head against the wall. Things are different today. We have the Paris Accord, which aims to limit the average increase in global temperatures to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, and to strive to keep it to only 1.5 degrees. We also have a Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change, which is the first truly national strategy to address the issue, after repeated attempts over the last 25 years ended largely in failure.

To meet the objectives of the Paris Accord, Canada is going to have to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by more than 80 per cent from today's levels. It's a staggering number, and analysis that tries to assess how we can get to an 80 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions consistently comes to three conclusions:

We have to strive to use energy as efficiently as possible.

## CanWEA 2017

### President Robert Hornung's Day One Opening Address

We have to decarbonize our electricity systems.

Nous devons utiliser de l'électricité non-émettrice le plus possible, pour tous nos usages.

We have to use that clean electricity as much as possible in all end uses.

As the most cost-competitive form of non-emitting generation available today, wind energy will be at the forefront of this effort.

But can we completely decarbonize our electricity system? I think we can and I think we must. It's not a resource issue. Canada has massive untapped reserves of wind, hydro, solar, geothermal and tidal power resources and is better positioned than almost any other country in the world to move to a 100 per cent climate-friendly grid.

It's also increasingly not an economic issue. We've already talked about the fact that wind energy is the most cost-competitive form of non-emitting generation available today. Well, in the 2020s it will be the cheapest form of generation – period. And other technologies like solar energy are on a similar trajectory.

With abundant resources and improving economics, one could think that the transition to a 100 per cent non-emitting grid is inevitable. All we have to do is sit back and watch it happen. In reality, however, the Energy Transition will not only be determined by resources and technology – it will also be determined by policy, markets and social acceptance.

We live in a world today where the rules governing our electricity grids and the electricity markets within which we operate were designed to meet the needs of a different era. They are inadequate, insufficient and unable to support the electricity grid of the future. We know that future grid will look dramatically different from the grid we know today. It will be more decentralized and diverse and will have a greater emphasis on complementary renewable resources, storage, energy efficiency, distributed power generation and empowerment of the consumer. And it will take advantage of the smart communications and data-gathering capabilities of our web-connected devices to transform the way industry, businesses and customers interact with it.

We are already in the midst of disruptive change, and we need to refine our approach to it. In Canada, consultations are underway in provinces like Alberta and Ontario to look at electricity market evolution. Our challenge is to ensure they go beyond a focus on addressing short-term challenges, and take active steps to create markets that will serve the energy needs and community expectations of the future.

We have to broaden our focus. It's absolutely critical that as Canadians we come to a common understanding of what we're trying to accomplish and what electricity system attributes are needed to achieve the results we're pursuing as a society. We then need to structure electricity markets and their governance in a way that provide incentives for the delivery of those attributes to the system.

This is a fundamental challenge for all of us as we look ahead.

Un autre important défi auquel nous devons faire face est celui de l'infrastructure.

## CanWEA 2017

### President Robert Hornung's Day One Opening Address

Another important challenge is infrastructure.

We are going to have to invest in significant new transmission and distribution infrastructure, as well as new interconnections between markets, to enable this transition, and we need to determine how we prioritize and finance these investments so infrastructure shortfalls do not become a barrier to smart energy decisions and the emergence of the future grid.

A third challenge is engaging Canadians and communities in the Energy Transition. . Gaining the support of individuals and communities, or earning social licence to operate, requires a focussed strategy and a lot of hard work. The ability of federal and provincial governments, the electricity industry generally, and the wind energy industry specifically, to engage effectively with Canadians in the local communities where they live, work and play, will have a direct impact on the pace of electricity grid transformation.

Related to the challenge of broad engagement, is the need to attract and maintain a strong and diverse workforce with the skills to plan, operate and maintain an increasingly sophisticated power grid. We still have a lot of work to do on gender diversity – women represent only about a quarter of the electricity sector workforce, and about five per cent of trades employees. With that in mind, CanWEA has recently become an Advocate for [The Leadership Accord on Gender Diversity in the Canadian Electricity Industry](#), an initiative of Electricity Human Resources Canada.

We also need to remember that getting to a 100 per cent climate-friendly grid is only one step in the Energy Transition. The second is to use that clean electricity as broadly as possible to offset the use of fossil fuels in other sectors of the economy.

Cette transition se déroule déjà sous nos yeux dans des secteurs comme celui des transports, alors que les manufacturiers automobiles offrent maintenant tous des modèles électriques et que les gouvernements s'engagent à retirer des routes les voitures propulsées par des moteurs à combustion.

We are already seeing that start to happen in areas like transportation, with all automakers now bringing electric cars to market and some governments making commitments to eliminate the use of the internal combustion engine in passenger vehicles.

Just as we need to be active on multiple fronts to move to a 100 per cent non-emitting grid, we will also need to encourage the development and implementation of strategies to encourage the increased use of electricity in different sectors. While the wind energy industry cannot lead these discussions, it is important for us to be an active participant.

This opening plenary session will include presentations on future visions of the electricity grid that are based on technology trends and climate imperatives, a discussion where leading players in the wind energy industry will share how they are preparing to be successful in the electricity system of the future and an assessment of the changes that will need to be made in the operation of wind energy assets in the future electricity grid.

I expect all of this discussion will make it clear that there is a significant, and growing, role for wind energy in the years ahead. To capitalize on that opportunity, we will need to continue to challenge ourselves to think beyond the next evolution in turbine design and the next procurement. We will need to be active participants in creating a vision of the future electricity grid in Canada and in defining the

## CanWEA 2017 President Robert Hornung's Day One Opening Address

Energy Transition pathway that will bring us to a new low-carbon economy powered by clean, affordable and reliable electricity. I know we are up to the challenge. We cannot fail. Future generations are depending on us.

Merci.

Thank you.

Robert Hornung  
CanWEA President

### **About the Canadian Wind Energy Association**

CanWEA is the voice of Canada's wind energy industry, actively promoting the responsible and sustainable growth of wind energy. A national non-profit association, CanWEA serves as Canada's leading source of credible information about wind energy and its social, economic and environmental benefits. Join us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Learn more at [www.canwea.ca](http://www.canwea.ca).

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