

New act brings certainty to green energy sector

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Despite an uncertain and pessimistic start, 2010 has turned out to be a banner year for green energy development in B.C.

Perhaps the most significant event this past year was passage of the long-anticipated Clean Energy Act in the B.C. Legislature.

The new act brought regulatory certainty to the green energy sector, for energy producers and consumers alike. Among the Act's various clean technology, environmental and economic growth objectives, it also created a solid foundation for exporting renewable green energy to places like Alberta and the U.S. and moved B.C. a step closer to becoming a renewable green energy powerhouse.

2010 also saw wind energy become a solid part of B.C.'s clean energy mix.

In November, B.C.'s largest wind farm, the Dokie Ridge wind project near Chetwynd, began supplying clean energy to the B.C. electrical grid, joining the Bear Mountain wind park, which became operational late in 2009.

Wind energy projects also accounted for about half of the electricity supply contracts awarded by B.C. Hydro to clean energy producers this past spring.

To say the least, wind power has finally arrived in B.C. and it's a fabulous and long overdue addition to B.C.'s extraordinary hydroelectric and run-of-river resources which are second to none.

2010 also saw a high level delegation of California legislators and environmentalists visiting B.C. on a fact-finding mission.

The delegation toured the Ashlu run-of-river facility near Squamish, and afterwards the head of the delegation (Patrick Mason, president of the California Foundation on the Environment and the Economy) commented on how amazed the group was by the project's small footprint and how impressed the group was by B.C.'s regulations relating to run-of-the-river projects, adding that he would be telling the environmental groups on his board that they really should take a look at them before they make up their minds.

So, as we approach the start of 2011 things are definitely looking very positive and the stage is set for 2011 to be another banner year for green energy in B.C.

As the new year unfolds, we will be following developments very closely and it is our sincere hope that the New Year brings green energy and prosperity for all British Columbians.

Bruce Sanderson

B.C. Citizens for Green Energy

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