



Take Charge! A National Day of Action in support of a Canadian Energy Strategy

Canadians experience long, cold winter months. As the snow starts to fly, our thoughts turn to staying warm. To do that, we need energy to heat our homes. But right now, Canada does not have a national energy strategy that addresses where our energy comes from, where it is going, or the high price of environmental devastation that can come with producing it.

That is why on February 2, 2008, Council of Canadians' chapters and members will be participating in events across the country as part of *Take Charge! A National Day of Action in support of a Canadian Energy Strategy*.

It will be a great way for activists across the country to raise awareness about energy issues, hold events, and strengthen the profile of the Council's energy campaign in the media. Together we can tell the federal government that Canada needs better controls over our energy resources, and a national strategy that guarantees energy supplies, protects the environment, provides a fair share of energy revenues, protects our citizens and natural resources, and ensures the needs of Canadians are put ahead of profits.

How your chapter can get involved:

You have probably already started thinking about ways you can raise awareness of energy issues. Many chapters have told us they plan to hold an event in their community. If you haven't already started thinking about your event, here some ideas to get you started:

Have a mitten party!

As a joint action, we will be asking Canadians across the country to send one mitten to Prime Minister Stephen Harper or their local MP in support of a Canadian Energy Strategy. (See *Send a Mitten to Stephen Harper* action sheet included in this kit.) Get together with other chapter members, friends and families and mail mittens to make a political point. Thousands of mittens will send a strong message!

Hand out handbills and fact sheets

We have some great materials available for distribution. Pick a popular, well-frequented location and get out and talk to people about energy concerns. Informal conversations are a great way to share information, and printed materials give people something to take away with them. You can download materials from www.canadians.org under our Energy Day of Action section on our website, or order copies from your regional office, or from Jeannette Muhongayire, Regional Organizing Team Assistant, at 1-800-387-7177, or by e-mail at jmuhongayire@canadians.org.

Panel discussions

In panel discussions, speakers make short presentations, followed by discussion or questions from audience members. Having a petition or a letter to sign is also a good way to involve the audience. Make sure you choose a topic that matters to your community, and have panelists that represent different views on the issue. Some panel topics could include: local energy concerns, energy and the environment, and why Canada needs a national energy strategy.

Meet with your MP

A national day of action is an excellent opportunity to visit your Member of Parliament. Organize a group of citizens to meet with your member, bring materials and fact sheets and discuss why Canada needs a national energy strategy.

Setting goals and planning your event

Public events are often thought up during inspired brainstorming sessions. It is important to set concrete goals for attendance and intended impact. This will give direction to your planning, as well as criteria for evaluating the event's success after it's over. Make a list of everything that will need to be done and divide up responsibilities among members of the group. Core members should delegate tasks so that one small group doesn't end up with the bulk of the work.

Media strategy

Getting media coverage is a good way to get publicity. To get your event mentioned in the media, send out a media release or a media advisory. The Council of Canadians national office will be coordinating a national media strategy, but getting some local coverage is a great way to get the word out. (See Media Tips for more information.)

An effective media strategy may also include letters to the editor explaining your views, whether it is about a local energy concern, or a general explanation of why Canada needs a national energy strategy.

Keep us in the loop

Let us know what kind of event you are planning so we can share success stories with other chapters across the country. Don't forget to take pictures of your event and send them to us. Most important of all, have fun!

For further assistance

Contact your Regional Organizer if you need further assistance:

British Columbia-Yukon: 1-604-688-8846 (toll free) 1-888-566-3888

Prairies: 1-780-429-4500 (toll free) 1-877-729-4500

Ontario-Quebec: 1-416-979-5554 (toll free) 1-800-208-7156

Atlantic: 1-902-422-7811