



Canadian Solar Industries Association
L'Association des Industries Solaires du Canada

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ontario Program is the Shining Light for Solar Energy in Canada *15,000 systems expected to be installed in next five years* *– Ontario becomes North American leader in supporting solar*

Cambridge, ON- March 21, 2006 – The Canadian Solar Industries Association (CanSIA) applauded the Ontario government announcement today of its new Standard Offer Contracts program which will support the deployment of solar electric systems and other renewable energy generators.

Says Rob McMonagle, Executive Director of CanSIA, “This opens up a tremendous opportunity for the Canadian solar industry. Finally we have a government in Canada that acknowledges that solar will have a major role in the energy supply in the near future and is willing to invest in that future.” The Standard Offer Contract program in Ontario is the first program in Canada that assists users of solar electric (photovoltaic or PV) technologies.

Currently Canada lags well behind its major trading partners, such as Japan, the US and many European nations, in the use of solar technologies. Canada installed 1 MW of PV last year while, in contrast, Germany installed over 600 MW.

“The small size of the Canadian PV market is primarily due to the lack of support offered by governments in Canada for the use of solar electricity,” says Rob McMonagle. CanSIA estimates that this program will see the installation of up to 15,000 systems by homeowners in Ontario over the next five years. This would be equivalent to about 40 MW.

The Ontario program in the initial five-year period will stimulate the market leaders or “early adopters” to purchase PV systems. While it does not cover the entire cost of a solar electric system, it is the key to building industry capacity and in attracting investment into the Canadian

solar industry with Ontario possibly becoming the economic centre of the solar industry in North America. CanSIA estimates that this program will be the first step towards greater solar sales, which, as the price of PV continues to drop, will see the installation of over 3,000 MW of PV in Ontario by 2025.

This program provides homeowners, farmers, small businesses, and building owners an opportunity to be part of the solution and not just part of the problem in working to overcome the energy challenges that Ontario faces in the coming years. “Ontario is now investing in building a world leading solar industry based in Ontario while insuring that Ontario’s future energy dollars remain in Ontario,” says Rob McMonagle. “Here we have one of the cleanest energy sources available, able to provide the power when Ontario needs it, creating both jobs and wealth in the province.”

CanSIA predicts that there could be over 40,000 jobs in Ontario’s solar industry by 2025. Currently there are less than 300 people employed in the solar PV industry in Ontario while over 30,000 people are now employed in the German solar PV industry. The Chinese solar industry now employs an estimated 100,000 people. In anticipation of the increased demand for more workers in the Ontario solar industry CanSIA will be expanding its PV Technicians training program to ensure that there is a skilled and properly trained workforce.

While CanSIA is pleased with today’s announcement there are still a number of challenges that the solar industry faces. Many details of the program will need to be sorted out to make this program simple for the homeowner and for utilities to administer. CanSIA is recommending that the payment process be integrated with the homeowner’s utility bill which will stimulate energy conservation and will simplify the process for local utilities. This is called “net billing.”

Ontario now becomes the leader in North America in its support of solar PV and CanSIA will be working with other governments in Canada to encourage them to follow Ontario’s lead and to enhance this support to allow wider participation from all Canadians.

In most of Canada’s trading partners support for solar comes from all three levels of government. For example the US government provides a tax credit for US citizens who purchase solar systems while in Europe many towns and cities “top up” the support provided to solar for systems installed in their municipality.

About CanSIA

The Canadian Solar Industries Association’s mission is to develop a strong, efficient, ethical and professional Canadian solar industry, able to service an expanding domestic energy market, to provide innovative solar solutions to world energy problems, and to play a major role in promoting the transition to a solar energy future worldwide.

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