



**Des communautés
plus fortes au Canada**

**Strengthening
Canada's Communities**

October 31, 2012

Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
Box 38, 200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network Manitoba (CCEDNet-MB) in response to the request for feedback on Tomorrow Now Manitoba's Green Plan.

Our Network is committed to promoting comprehensive and integrated approaches to improving economic, social, and environmental conditions in communities. We also believe that these approaches will lead to successful and lasting outcomes when they are community-driven. For these reasons, we are very pleased to have the opportunity to share the priorities of our membership and contribute toward the development of a new plan, and ultimately new legislation, that aims to make Manitoba one of the most sustainable places to live on earth.

A Broad Understanding of Sustainable Development

CCEDNet-MB is concerned that the shift in language from "Sustainable Development" to "Green Prosperity" reflects a narrow and weaker understanding of, and commitment to, achieving sustainability in Manitoba. The Sustainable Development Act emphasized the interconnectedness between the environmental, economic, human health, and social consequences of development strategies. The recognition of the key third pillar of sustainability, the human and social component, is not clearly outlined in Manitoba's Green Plan which focuses on building a prosperous economy while protecting the environment. You cannot have a truly sustainable or prosperous economy unless it also works to achieve social sustainability alongside that of economic and environmental. The International Institute for Sustainable Development is clear about this: *"At its simplest level, any form of development that is not sustainable contains the seeds of its own destruction. For development to be sustainable, it must not only generate wealth: it must also advance social justice, reduce and eventually eliminate poverty, and remain within the limits imposed by ecosystem and resource resilience."*

¹ <http://www.iisd.org/about/>

To ensure this broader understanding of sustainability is not lost, **CCEDNet-MB recommends that the Province’s Community Economic Development (CED) Policy Framework and Lens be embedded in Manitoba’s Green Plan and in the new Act.** The CED Policy Framework and Lens is intended to ensure that CED principles are integrated into all government programs, policies, and processes so that economic, environmental, and social benefits can be maximized. The importance of embedding the CED principles into legislation has long been emphasized by those both internal and external to government. Their integration into the new Act will help ensure that the actions coming out of it also maximize multiple economic, environmental, and social benefits and contribute toward a truly sustainable Manitoba economy.

Successful implementation of Manitoba’s Green Plan and the new Act will require interdepartmental cooperation, particularly if the goal is to achieve sustainability on all three pillars. **CCEDNet-MB recommends that the Province situate Manitoba’s Green Plan and new Act in a centralized location such as a Cabinet Committee to ensure it is implemented effectively, and to ensure all relevant departments are held accountable for results.**

Sustainable Procurement

Manitoba’s Green Plan references the creation of a website to encourage “green and sustainable procurement” and the provision of tools to develop purchasing practices that are “environmentally preferable and socially responsible.” These references to a broader understanding of sustainability are critical.

The Sustainable Development Act clearly articulated procurement guidelines inclusive of sustainable development procurement goals and an accountability mechanism for ensuring departments made progress toward achieving those goals. The procurement guidelines also applied to Crown corporations, local authorities, school divisions, universities, colleges, regional health authorities, etc. Their collective purchasing ability is significant and its impact would be maximized by shifting toward purchasing policies that account for added economic, environmental, and social value. The procurement guidelines were helped leverage successful procurement policies such as the Green and Sustainable Procurement Policy and the Aboriginal Procurement Initiative. **CCEDNet-MB recommends that existing procurement guidelines and goals within the Sustainable Development Act be incorporated into the new Act and be strengthened to ensure greater accountability for results.**

Sustainable Economies: A role for Co-operatives and Social Enterprises

Truly sustainable economies are about much more than just green economies. Sustainable economies are inclusive, generate an equitable distribution of economic benefits, and enable all individuals to participate meaningfully in their communities. They are shaped, in part, by businesses that are mandated to consider more than the maximization of profits. Sustainable

economies can be achieved by supporting the development of businesses that focus on a triple bottom line as well as those that are owned by, and that create jobs for, Manitobans. **CCEDNet-MB recommends that Manitoba's Green Plan and the new Act secure Provincial support for the emergence and growth of businesses that contribute to sustainable economies, with particular focus on co-operatives and social enterprises.**

Co-operatives contribute to sustainable economies because they are rooted and governed locally. They also distribute profits equitably while providing jobs and services to members rather than concentrate wealth and other benefits in the hands of a few who may live outside of our Province. The co-operative business model is more sustainable. 62 per cent of new co-operatives are still operating after five years, compared with 35 per cent for other new businesses. After 10 years, the figures are 44 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

Social enterprises contribute to sustainable economies by placing social and environmental sustainability goals at the core of their model, rather than the pursuit of profit. Support for the emergence and growth of these businesses will result in a greater return on investment to government and society as they contribute to more inclusive and stronger local economies, more jobs for people with barriers to employment, the provision of important community services, reduced poverty, renewed communities, and more sustainable environments.

Community-Owned Wind Energy

While Manitoba's Green Policy mentions renewable energy, it does not make a strong commitment toward the creation of Manitoba-owned wind energy. Wind energy is a key component of sustainable energy production. Community-owned wind energy will do much more to achieve a sustainable economy as it accounts for all three pillars of sustainability. The model empowers communities by enabling local residents to own and direct local economic development in a way that ensures profits remain in Manitoba and for the benefit of people in local communities. **CCEDNet-MB recommends that Manitoba's Green Plan and new Act include support for community-owned enterprises that produce wind energy by ensuring wind energy is purchased at a rate that secures the long-term viability of these enterprises.**

A Sustainable Food Economy

Manitoba's Green Plan and the Green Prosperity Act provide a significant opportunity to reshape our local food economy. We know that food is connected to not only the economy, but to the environment, health, and community. By re-localizing our food economy, we can create economic opportunities for local families, reduce the carbon footprint of our food system, enhance the quality of our food, and improve our health.

More can be done to steer our food system from one that is export focused, increasingly owned by multinational corporations, and so heavily dependent on fossil fuels toward one that is more sustainable for our local economy and the people it serves. Manitoba's Green Plan references exploring the potential of community garden allotments on Crown land and the development of a local food procurement policy from government institutions, which is a great start. **CCEDNet-MB recommends that the Province strengthen its commitments toward re-localizing our food economy by ensuring they are included in the new Act.**

Thanks again for the opportunity to participate in this important process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these ideas. I can be reached at (204) 943-0547 or breimer@ccednet-rcdec.ca.

Yours sincerely,



Brendan Reimer,
Regional Coordinator
Canadian Community Economic Development Network

The Canadian CED Network - MB promotes Community Economic Development as a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving economic, social, and environmental conditions in communities. This approach understands that solutions to complex community challenges will be most successful and sustainable when they are community-led. Our focus, as directed by our members, revolves around communications and information brokering, research on innovative and effective practice, promoting CED policy, leadership and skill development opportunities, and building the capacity of non-profit organizations.

More than one hundred members are represented by the Canadian CED Network - MB including the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Community Futures of Manitoba, Food Matters Manitoba, Manitoba Cooperative Association, Health in Common, Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations throughout the province, CCPA-Manitoba, Assiniboine Credit Union, SEED Winnipeg, and other social enterprise and CED organizations. Our members represent hundreds of community organizations that are working with thousands of community members across the Province. The Canadian CED Network – MB is also an active participant in many coalitions and working groups including Make Poverty History Manitoba, Right to Housing, Rural Team Manitoba, the Manitoba Co-op Vision Strategy, and the Social Enterprise Council of Canada.