LOW CARBON FUTURES AND NATURAL GAS:

Bridge or Barrier ?

February 26, 2013

5:45 - 6:00 pm • Meet the Speaker
6:00 - 6:30 pm • Presentation
6:30 - 7:30 pm • Q & A and Discussion

2017 Dunton Tower
Carleton University

The transition to a low carbon future, on a time scale that is responsive to the climate crisis we are facing, will require a boom in the application of clean energy technology over the next fifty years on a scale surpassing the boom in fossil fuels that has characterized the past 50 years. It is not necessary to eliminate fossil fuel use in a low carbon future, but emissions from coal, oil and gas must be brought down to a fraction of their current levels.

What might such a low carbon transition look like in Canada? Will increased reliance on natural gas help us get there, or is the prospect of cheap and abundant natural gas supply part of the problem? At present, there is excitement around growing shale gas supply and its impact on electricity, cogeneration and transportation. This is countered by unresolved environmental issues associated with shale gas development, and the question of whether we should look at natural gas as a transition fuel, or as a prolongation of the fossil-fuel economy which is impeding progress to low carbon energy sources.

Ralph Torrie
Managing Director
Trottier Energy Futures Project

Ralph Torrie has spent 35 years in the field of energy and environment. Following an Honours B. Sc. from the University of Waterloo, Ralph has spent his professional career developing and implementing environmentally sustainable energy strategies for companies, municipalities, and governments. His work experience includes the United Nations University, the International Development Research Centre, Vice President of ICF International, and Managing Director of Navigant Consulting, and projects for the David Suzuki Foundation and the National Roundtable on Environment and the Economy. In 2002, he received the Canadian Geographic's Canadian Environment Silver Award for his work with local governments on climate change.

He is now the principal investigator with the Trottier Energy Futures project. Its mandate is to identify and begin implementation of a low-carbon, sustainable energy future for Canada—a future in which energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada by 2050 are roughly 80% below the 1990 level.

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