

News release

GREENPEACE

Inuit community turns to solar energy as new report highlights its potential for sustainable economic development in the North

25 August 2016 (Clyde River, Nunavut, Canadian Arctic) — The Inuit community of Clyde River today celebrated the installation of solar panels on their Community Hall, another landmark in their fight against seismic blasting and oil exploration which has taken them all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

After working with Greenpeace and the Vancouver Renewable Energy Coop, 27 solar panels are now installed on the Community Hall there, a move that will increase their energy independence as well as their environmental sustainability.

"This is a happy day for Clyde River. The solar panels on our Community Hall will allow us to produce energy with less diesel while saving money at the same time that we reinvest into youth programs. Renewable energy that does not harm nature is exactly what we want for our planet. We are proving that solar energy is a real possibility in the Arctic. Destructive seismic blasting is just not needed," said James Qillaq, the mayor of Clyde River.

In addition to the environmental benefits of installing these solar panels, there are strong financial incentives supporting the project. Solar technology will enable the community to rely less on diesel-generated electricity throughout the spring, summer, and fall months. This will result in a savings of approximately \$4,500 CAD a year on the electrical bill for the Community Hall.

To coincide with the completion of this project, Greenpeace released the report [Beyond Fossil Fuels - Sustainable Economic Development Opportunities in Eastern Nunavut](#), developed by the [Centre for Sustainable Economy](#), in consultation with a number of scientists, government sources and individuals in Nunavut.

"Future generations will judge us by how well we treat those least responsible for the climate crisis but suffering the worst of its effects — including the Inuit of Nunavut," said Daphne Wysham, Climate Justice Campaign Director at the Center for Sustainable Economy and co-author of the report. "We must ensure that the Nunavummiut don't just survive, with their basic needs protected and assured — we must ensure that they thrive with their culture intact."

Oscar-winning actor, climate activist and storyteller Emma Thompson — who will be hosting [an event in Toronto tonight](#) to share stories from her experience in the Canadian Arctic — just spent 10 days in Clyde River and on board Greenpeace's ship the *Arctic Sunrise*, participating in a series of community activities and sailing to some of the ecological hotspots under threat from seismic blasting.

"The Arctic is melting largely because of oil and gas consumption. The response of gas and oil conglomerates is to rejoice, pile in and seismically blast the place in search for more. It's a ghastly carousel of destruction and greed. Far in the North, a tiny community is fighting. They're saying no to the seismic blasting that would destroy their lives. They're creating their own solar energy supply. They are protecting the Arctic, which means they are protecting our planet. They are doing what successive governments around the world have repeatedly signed up to do and never ever done," said Emma Thompson.

"It's time for Trudeau and his fellow power-brokers to pay attention to Clyde River Inuit and follow their example. In the fight against climate change, Clyde River is the truest leader of all."

The Inuit of Clyde River will be at the Supreme Court of Canada on November 30th to demand, once again, that the permits issued by the National Energy Board in 2014 to conduct seismic exploration in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait be cancelled.

Seismic blasting — a process of firing extremely loud sounds into the ocean in search for oil and gas — has been successfully stalled in the last two years as a result of a legal challenge launched by Clyde River, meaning bowheads, narwhals, belugas, and other marine mammals are safe from the impacts of the seismic blasts.

“The decision to allow seismic blasting in Baffin Bay despite community opposition was wrong and would have devastating consequences,” said Greenpeace Canada Executive Director Joanna Kerr. “But the Trudeau government can undo the wrong that has been done and uphold the rights of Inuit people to decide on their future and their lands.”

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For more information:

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Photo gallery:

<http://media.greenpeace.org/collection/27MZIFJJIJQZB>

Notes to editors:

Solar installation technical details:

The solar installation is made up of 27 Polycrystalline 60-cell photovoltaic panels (modules) at 255 W each. Seven APS brand microinverters turn the direct current (DC) from the modules to 3-phase 208 V alternating current (AC). The panels have been installed on the Community Hall's south-facing wall. The AC current has a dedicated breaker in the building's electrical panel. The microinverters are designed to only operate when the grid is active and producing at a ~60 Hz frequency. This is a safeguard against "electrical islanding," when the grid goes down and line workers expect wires to be dead. A second mobile kit will also be built and given to the community. This one panel system will be designed to bring onto the land when people go camping, hunting, fishing or berry picking. This installation will have a nominal (maximum) production of about 6.8 kW. This translates to approximately 6200 kWh of electricity per year. Vancouver Renewable Energy Co-op installed the system with extra people-power from Greenpeace Canada, and some individuals from Clyde River who learned to maintain the system themselves. Vancouver Renewable Energy Co-op is a worker cooperative that was founded in 2004. They were hired by Greenpeace Canada to conduct a solar assessment in September 2015 in Clyde River.

The Centre for Sustainable Economy

The [Center for Sustainable Economy](#) (CSE) is a 25-year-old environmental economics think-tank that works to speed the transition to a sustainable society by analyzing the impacts of public policy, programs, and projects, by developing creative solutions for government agencies, businesses, non-profits, and educators, and by providing expert support for legislative, administrative, and legal campaigns.

Dr. John Talberth holds a Ph.D. in International and Environmental Economics from the University of New Mexico and an M.A. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon. His areas of expertise include non-market valuation, international trade, public policy, benefit-cost analysis, forest management, sustainable development, sustainability indicators and land use planning. He has published articles in several peer reviewed journals including Ecological Economics, Contemporary Economic Policy, Natural Resources Journal and Environment, Development and Sustainability as well as several book chapters.

Daphne Wysham is leading CSE's policy and advocacy work on climate change. She has worked on research and advocacy at the intersection of climate change, human rights, fossil fuels, international finance, carbon markets and sustainable economies since 1996. Her path-breaking research and advocacy has resulted in shifts in public policy and investment at the national and international level. Her writings, commentary and analysis have appeared in national news publications and on radio and TV, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Grist, The Guardian, The Nation, The Financial Times, The Huffington Post and on Al Jazeera, Democracy Now!, MSNBC, BBC, NPR, and Marketplace, among others.