



WHAT'S BEEN DONE SO FAR:

LIEN ORIGINS, PRINCIPLES AND PROPOSALS



Theresa McClenaghan

Counsel, Canadian Environmental Law Association

www.cela.ca

March 31, 2005



LIEN ORIGINS

- Environmental, anti-poverty and affordable housing advocacy groups already working independently on energy issues
 - ACTO addressing impact of security deposit requirements on low-income consumers' access to electricity services
 - Canadian Environmental Law Association, with IndEco and in consultation with ACTO, submits report - *DSM for low-income consumers* - to Ontario Energy Board's consultation on Demand Side Management (conservation)
 - Following October 30th announcement of electricity rate cap review, ACTO, Income Security Advocacy Centre and Community Social Planning Council-Toronto submit comments & recommendations to Energy Minister regarding impact of higher electricity prices on low-income consumers

LIEN ORIGINS (2)

- Environmental, anti-poverty and affordable housing advocacy groups already working independently on energy issues
 - Share the Warmth, in partnership with social service agencies and participating local utilities, provides direct financial assistance to low-income consumers in energy crisis and facing disconnection
 - CELA and TEA along with partners such as Pembina bringing proposals to provincial government on environmentally sustainable solutions to the energy supply/demand crunch in Ontario (with focus on conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources)

LIEN ORIGINS (3)

- Michael Shapcott (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, U of T Center for Urban and Community Studies and TEA board member) and Edward de Gale (STW) organize first meeting on March 10, 2004 of what becomes the Low-Income Energy Network:
 - CELA, Share the Warmth, ACTO, ISAC, CSPC-Toronto, TDRC and TEA
- Focus is March 29th, 2004 media event to highlight impact of impending April 1st electricity price hike on low-income households and to propose positive solutions

LIEN ORIGINS (4)

- LIEN recommends:
 - Direct energy assistance for those unable to absorb the higher cost of power or those in emergency circumstances.
 - Conservation programs that lower bills and reduce pollution by making the homes of low-income households more energy efficient.
- On March 29th, government announces \$2 million Emergency Energy Fund

LIEN ORIGINS (5)

- Following March 29th media conference, LIEN founding members agree to continue to work together on low-income consumer issues
- LIEN drafts Mission Statement, sets up interim steering committee to direct LIEN activities and continues to recruit supporting members (now over 40, with more to come)

MISSION STATEMENT

- The Low-Income Energy Network:
 - aims to ensure universal access to adequate energy as a basic necessity, while minimizing the impacts on health and on the local and global environment of meeting the essential energy and conservation needs of all Ontarians.
 - promotes programs and policies which tackle the problems of energy poverty and homelessness, reduce Ontario's contribution to smog and climate change, and promote a healthy economy through renewable and energy efficient technologies.



Areas of LIEN activity:

- Media Releases and Media Events
- Presentations
- Reports
- Accomplishments



•
•
•

Some Recent Media Releases / Events:

- LIEN has issued media releases or held media conferences at some significant points relevant to the low income energy concerns of LIEN members

“Electricity Price Hikes Will Hit Poor Hardest”

- On March 11, 2005, in response to the announcement of higher prices for electricity, the Low Income Energy Network (LIEN) called on the provincial government to introduce province-wide energy conservation and bill assistance programs for low-income households.

•
• “Growing number of households caught in Ontario energy crisis”

- On January 20, 2005 LIEN issued a press release to announce the release of LIEN's low-income energy efficiency program. LIEN developed this energy efficiency program for local distribution companies to address the particular needs of low-income consumers for the 2005 heating season.

•
•
• “On April 1st when the electricity cap comes off, is it just a matter of time before the lights go out for low-income consumers?”

- On March 20, 2004 LIEN issued a press release responding to the April 1, 2004 increase in electricity rates for residential consumers.

SOME PRESENTATIONS

- LIEN through its steering committee members has given a number of significant presentations since its inception.

LIEN and the low-income energy burden in Ontario

- LIEN gave a presentation at the Building Partnerships for Energy Conservation Workshop in January 2005. The workshop was hosted by Climate Air Connections and the Clean Air Foundation.

•
•
• Regulated Price Plan and low-
income consumers

- LIEN gave a presentation in September, 2004 at the Ontario Energy Board's initial consultation on the Regulated Price Plan.

-
- Reports prepared by LIEN or
LIEN members.

- LIEN has prepared or commissioned a number of significant reports over the course of the last year.

DSM for low-income consumers in Ontario

- The Canadian Environmental Law Association, on behalf of LIEN, submitted a report to the Ontario Energy Board consultation process on demand side management and demand response.

Low-income energy conservation and assistance

- In response to a request from the Minister of Energy, LIEN developed recommendations on actions the Ontario government could take to help low-income households immediately cope with the rise in electricity prices that took place April 1, 2004.

Regulated Price Plan and low-income consumers

- LIEN prepared a response to the Ontario Energy Board's Regulated Price Plan proposal.

Designing a low-income energy efficiency program

- LIEN developed recommendations for a low-income energy efficiency program design for use by Toronto Hydro and other electricity local distribution companies.

LIEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Getting low-income consumer issues on the radar of the government, local electrical utilities, the regulator (OEB), the media, the public
 - “Since the proposed plan would not take effect until April, consumers would have a chance to take conservation measures, reduce their consumption levels, and therefore, limit the impact of the price change on their electricity bill.” Nov. 25/03 - Min. of Energy news release
 - “Although the impact of the April 1 energy price hike is expected to be minimal, the government recognizes that even a small change in energy costs can have a significant impact on low-income households.” March 29, 2004 - ComSoc backgrounder

LIEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(2)

- *Low-income energy conservation and assistance* - report on overall model for a program submitted to Ministers Dwight Duncan and Sandra Pupatello in April 2004, with follow up meeting with their policy advisors
- Oral depositions at committee hearings on Bill 100, *Electricity Restructuring Act, 2004*
- Oral and written submission to OEB's proceeding on Unpaid Electricity Charges
- Participating in OEB's development of new Regulated Price Plan
- Development, with stakeholders, of recommendations/report - *Low-income energy conservation program* - for inclusion in Toronto Hydro's and other LDCs' C & DM plans for 2005

LIEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(3)

- Enhanced LIEN's outreach and networking capacity, as demonstrated by the growth of LIEN membership from 7 organizations in early 2004 to 47 organizations today
- Planned and host a two-day strategic planning session and one day conference to engage stakeholders in the design a low-income energy conservation program as well as the April 7th LIEN conference for LIEN members and supporters

LIEN Accomplishments (4)

- Production and release of a low-income energy conservation program, the success of which is demonstrated by the fact that has been favourably received by the regulator (the Ontario Energy Board) and in the \$4.6 million currently allocated for low-income conservation programs to date, with more significant programs likely to be adopted in the future.

•
•
•

LIEN Accomplishments 2005 and on?

- Continued joint discussion of impacts of energy decisions on both low income consumers and environment
- Continued work to communicate consistent messages that we all support
- Continued efforts to see on the ground programs that will affect low income energy burden and access to conservation

•
•
•

LIEN Accomplishments 2005 and beyond? (2)

- Building on efforts to speak each others' language
 - Identification of areas where common concerns arise
 - Identification of areas where diverging perspectives need to be considered
 - Much better appreciation of wide ranging impacts of policies we advocate
- • • • • • • • • •