

ENERGY PLAN NEEDS TRILLION\$¹

Paul Luke©

Building a global clean energy infrastructure will cost trillions of dollars, green power expert Tom Rand says. Huge as the capital needs are, the clean energy industry faces an even bigger challenge in the form of public skepticism, the author and venture capitalist told Clean Energy B.C.'s annual conference in Vancouver on Monday (<http://www.ippbc.com/>).

"This is the largest infrastructure build in human history. It's the biggest challenge, I think, that we've ever faced," the author of Kick the Fossil Fuel Habit told delegates at the two-day conference. "The scale of capital we need to deploy is in the tens of trillions of dollars globally in the face of a credit crunch, in the face of public skepticism about the need to do it."

Rand said he believes the world is up to the challenge of building clean energy infrastructure -- but the question remains whether it can move fast enough. Referring to climate change as an "empirical certainty" rather than a theoretical event, Rand said science shows the world has 10 to 20 years to turn things around.

B.C. is only too familiar with the impact of climate change in the wake of the mountain pine beetle's assault on its forests, he said. Yet, many continue to question or deny climate change, he said. "We haven't really had an adult conversation about this topic in this country for a long time," he said. "We have a prime minister who is the only leader in the developed world who has never given a major policy speech about climate change."

The question Canada must answer is whether it's going to be a buyer or a seller of clean technology in a marketplace that holds tremendous opportunities, Rand said.

¹ The Province, November 09, 2010