

One Change model lauded before House of Representatives at hearings in Washington, DC

Founding partners Hydro Ottawa and City of Ottawa also mentioned

May 12, 2009, Washington, DC— US energy efficiency expert Dr. Karen Ehrhardt-Martinez recently praised One Change and its award-winning Project Porchlight campaign before an influential committee of the United States House of Representatives, and encouraged the Department of Energy (DOE) to adopt similar programs to help meet the US' progressive energy saving targets.

During testimony about social and behavioral insights for generating large reductions in energy use, Dr. Ehrhardt-Martinez used One Change and Project Porchlight as an example of a successful community-based social marketing campaign aimed at encouraging people to adopt energy-efficient behaviors. She heralded One Change's innovative campaign model, highlighted its successes to date, and cited some of Project Porchlight's early funders, including Hydro Ottawa and the City of Ottawa.

"Socio-cultural and interpersonal interventions recognize the importance of social institutions and culture, norms, and networks in the shaping of individual and organizational behaviors," said Dr. Ehrhardt-Martinez. According to her, Project Porchlight is one of "a few energy programs that are successfully incorporating some of these socio-cultural insights into their efforts to increase the adoption and diffusion of energy-efficient technologies."

"Project Porchlight uses several different social insights to encourage the adoption of compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs," she continued. "By using existing networks, the project encourages local action in neighborhoods and within groups by working with group members who deliver light bulbs door to door.

"Light bulb recipients make a commitment to their neighbors that they will install the light bulb (preferably in a prominent place) as a symbol of their commitment to the effort – an action which also provides a first step in shaping their identity as someone who is willing to take action to reduce their environmental impact."

"One Change empowers people to believe that simple actions matter and to make smart choices that protect the environment," said One Change Executive Director Stuart Hickox. "We've been growing at a rapid rate, with successful programs now running on both sides of the border. Just last month, Project Porchlight surpassed the milestone of delivering more than 2 million free CFL bulbs to residents across North America. And we were recently honored as one of the top 5 non-profit organizations in the US by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) ENERGY STAR program."

One Change recently became the first Canada-US partner of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), an affiliation aimed at building new partnerships with municipalities, states and provincial governments.

With successful campaigns recently completed in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Vermont, Project Porchlight is shifting its focus to New Jersey—where a 1 million bulb campaign is in full swing—and to Washington State—where a collaborative new campaign is poised to take off this summer.

“But One Change is about more than light bulbs,” continued Hickox. “We’re excited to launch an innovative new campaign to help drivers improve their fuel efficiency, save money, and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The One Change: Fuel pilot campaign will kick off in Ottawa South this summer, the very same place where we began Project Porchlight five years ago—with great success.”

Dr. Ehrhardt-Martinez is a Research Associate with the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing energy efficiency as a means of promoting economic prosperity, energy security, and environmental protection.

She lauded One Change during the April 28 hearing of the United States House Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Energy and Environment in Washington, DC. The important committee has oversight over US legislation related to energy conservation and efficiency, the energy aspects of climate change, and research related to the DOE and EPA.

To view the full text of Dr. Ehrhardt-Martinez’s testimony, please visit:
<http://www.onechange.org/wp-content/2009/05/housetestimony28apr2009.pdf>

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Manon Crôteau
Communications and Outreach Manager, One Change
manon@onechange.org
1-866-585-6359 x.218

For business development opportunities, please contact:

Chris Kelly
Development Coordinator
chris@onechange.org
1-866-585-6359 x.200