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SOLAR BC INCENTIVES DOUBLE UP

\$2000 Now Available For New Builds and Existing Homes

VANCOUVER BC, February, 1, 2010 — SolarBC announced today that incentives for solar hot water will double during February and March, from \$1,000 to \$2,000. This investment will support the installation of domestic solar water heating systems for the first 200 homes over the next 2-months. So, if you have been wondering about installing solar hot water but haven't yet taken the plunge, now might be a smart time to do so.

Liz Kelly from SolarBC did exactly that last week by installing solar hot water on her own home on the Sunshine Coast. "I just had to walk the talk," said Liz. "I could hardly live on the Coast and not take advantage of 2,400 hours of free sunshine we get every year. Our solar hot water system was installed in just a day and a half by Terratek, one of the SolarBC registered contractors, and comes with a neat little monitor that we've put up in the kitchen to tell us exactly how much money we're saving."

The double incentives from SolarBC will also help homeowners take advantage of a unique Zero Interest loan through partner TD Canada Trust, which makes solar hot water a really affordable option. As well as putting her panels up, Liz also took advantage of the SolarBC loan. "I wanted to see for myself just how it worked. It was really simple and quick. I applied online through the SolarBC website and it took less than 24 hours to get approval. With no up front cost and no interest to pay, our monthly payments are \$110 a month for 5 years, less than our internet and cable bill."

The momentum in SolarBC has been building over the past few months. With a 40% increase in residential installations, there are now also 9 Solar Communities, soon to be increasing to 15, along with installations planned for 19 local government buildings, 27 schools, social housing and First Nations communities. An interactive map on the SolarBC website shows all the installations taking place across the province. SolarBC has also increased its incentives for schools, with up to 90% of the costs now covered through SolarBC and the Natural Resources Canada ecoENERGY for Renewable Heat Program.

"There really is a solar revolution going on in BC" said Nitya Harris, Executive Director. "With almost 200 homeowners switching to solar hot water so far, we're aiming to double that number by doubling up our incentives to \$2,000 for the next 200 installations. We want people to be ready for the sun coming out this spring." On top of the boost from SolarBC, an additional \$1,250 is available through the ecoEnergy retrofit program, along with \$300 for FortisBC customers, which means almost half of the cost of a solar hot water system could be paid for.

The new incentives available through SolarBC make BC's program one of the strongest in North America, helping BC towards the path other solar industry leaders have taken, such as Germany and China.

And if you think there's not enough sun for solar hot water in BC, you might be surprised to learn that out of all the provinces, Environment Canada ranks BC 1st for the 'Warmest Spring' and 4th for the 'Most Sunny Days Year Round' with an average of 296 days of sunshine each year. The sun shines in BC on average for over 120 hours a month for 8 months of the year, with 4 months receiving well over 200 hours of sunshine. So its official, the sunny days outnumber the grey days by a wide margin, and BC also receives more annual sunshine than both Germany and China.

Most people don't realize that heating water accounts for about 30 per cent of a typical BC household's energy use. A solar hot water system can provide up to half of that energy on an annual basis (often all of it during the summer months), cutting energy costs by around \$300 a year and reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by up to one tonne.

SolarBC is funded by the provincial and federal governments to help British Columbians invest in renewable energy solutions that will reduce energy use and greenhouse emissions while increasing energy security and saving money.

For the new incentives to apply, systems must be fully installed by March 31st 2010.

To find out how to apply, call the toll free hotline: **1-866-650-8126**, email info@solarbc.ca or visit the website at: www.solarbc.ca/install/households

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For more information on this or other SolarBC programs, call the toll free hotline: **1-866-650-8126**, email info@solarbc.ca or visit the website at: www.solarbc.ca

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