



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Government of Canada Launches New Sustainable Communities Initiative**

**OTTAWA, Ontario, June 01, 2009** — Communities across Canada will benefit from better energy efficiency and improved environmental impact, thanks to a new initiative launched today by the Government of Canada. The new \$4.2- million, EQUilibrium™ Communities Initiative will seek to improve community planning and develop healthy sustainable communities that are energy-efficient, economically viable and vibrant places to live.

The Honourable Lisa Raitt, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, and Ed Komarnicki, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), made the announcement today at the Canadian Centre for Housing Technology.

"Our Government is investing in more than just clusters of energy-efficient homes — we're creating cost-efficient, sustainable neighbourhoods," said Minister Raitt. "Building communities that use new, clean-energy technologies will create high-quality jobs for Canadians while protecting and preserving our environment."

The EQUilibrium™ Communities Initiative will provide financial, technical and promotional assistance to sustainable community projects chosen through a national competition. It will showcase the talents and innovation of Canadian residential developers, planners, designers and municipalities. The initiative is being led and funded equally by NRCan and CMHC.

"The EQUilibrium Communities Initiative will highlight the talents and innovation of Canadian residential developers, planners, designers and municipalities as leaders in sustainable housing and community development," said Mr. Komarnicki. "These communities will integrate sustainable housing, infrastructure and land-use planning to help Canadians balance their housing needs with those of the natural environment."

A call for project submissions will be issued this summer, inviting developers, with their teams of planners, designers, and municipalities, to submit project proposals. Winning teams will develop and showcase neighbourhoods that are more sustainable and energy efficient than most existing communities. Improvements will be achieved in the areas of energy use, water efficiency, environmental protection, land-use planning, clean-energy transportation and affordable housing.

#### **For Broadcast Use:**

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NRCan's news releases and backgrounders are available at [www.nrcan.gc.ca/media](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/media).

## Backgrounder

### Equilibrium™ Communities Initiative

The Equilibrium™ Communities Initiative is a \$4.2-million sustainable community demonstration project, led jointly and equally funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) ecoENERGY Technology Initiative (ecoETI), a component of the Government of Canada's ecoACTION initiative.

The Equilibrium™ Communities Initiative will provide financial, technical and promotional assistance to neighbourhood development projects across the country chosen through a national competition. A call for project submissions will be issued in early summer 2009, inviting developers, with their teams of planners, designers and municipalities, to submit project proposals.

The initiative will provide these leading-edge teams with an opportunity to be at the forefront of bringing to market energy-efficient, sustainable and profitable communities that benefit consumers, the environment and the economy.

Resources will be directed to approximately six winning neighbourhood development projects. The final number of Equilibrium Communities may increase or decrease, based on the quality and suitability of the submissions received and the funding requested.

The Equilibrium Communities Initiative builds on the success of the Equilibrium Sustainable Housing Demonstration Initiative launched by CMHC in 2006 and supported by the Government of Canada's CanmetENERGY expertise. Fifteen Equilibrium demonstration homes are currently planned, under construction or completed and on display across Canada. Equilibrium™ demonstration homes are highly energy-efficient, low-environmental impact homes that provide healthy indoor living for their occupants, and produce as much energy as they consume on an annual basis.

The Equilibrium™ Communities Initiative extends the Equilibrium™ principles to the community or neighbourhood scale. Equilibrium™ Communities project submissions will be evaluated by a panel of industry experts based on the following criteria:

- **Energy** — an energy-efficient community that balances energy supply and use to minimize greenhouse gas emissions;
- **Land Use and Housing** — a compact community with a balanced mix of activities, housing choices and commercial, institutional, recreational and industrial land uses;

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- **Water, Waste Water and Storm Water** — a community that will minimize the use and disposal of water and negative impacts on watersheds;
- **Transportation** — a community that reduces fossil-fuel use from personal vehicle travel and provides opportunities for energy-efficient and healthy alternatives;
- **Natural Environment** — a community that protects, enhances and restores the natural environment; and
- **Financial Viability** — a marketable community that, through its design, operation, integration and financing, is economically viable over the long term.

The initiative is funded through CMHC's housing research program. This includes best practices for neighbourhood design, tools for sustainable community planning and technical information on sustainable, energy efficient, Healthy Housing. NRCan is providing funding through the ecoETI, which supports the development and demonstration of the next-generation clean energy technologies that will make it possible to break through to emissions-free energy production and use.

For more information on the EQUilibrium Communities initiative, visit [www.ecoaction.gc.ca](http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca).