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MEDIA RELEASE

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Biomethane Turns Waste into Clean Energy for B.C.

BRITISH COLUMBIA – A new study released today reveals clean energy from waste material is closer to becoming a commercial reality in British Columbia, announced Technology, Trade and Economic Development Minister Ida Chong.

The announcement was made during the opening of British Columbia Innovation Council Day at the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) Annual Summit in Vancouver, B.C.

“British Columbia’s bio-economy is growing and this study acknowledges the great energy potential that resides in the Fraser Valley,” said Chong. “The British Columbia Innovation Council has taken a leadership role in furthering the Province’s Climate Action Plan and positioning British Columbia as a champion of innovation and clean technologies.”

The study led by the British Columbia Innovation Council (BCIC) further investigates the commercial viability of refining biogas from organic waste materials into biomethane—a renewable natural gas that can be sold in existing gas markets. A successful practice in Europe and the United States, biomethane production provides an opportunity for B.C. to develop and market a renewable energy alternative to natural gas at a price that competes with fossil fuels.

“Taking advantage of growing biofuel and bioenergy opportunities is a key focus of B.C.’s Agriculture Plan and Bioenergy Plan,” said Agriculture and Lands Minister Stan Hagen. “The findings from this study are significant to the many agricultural producers in our province who can put their waste resources to use – benefiting the environment, the economy and all British Columbians.”

This study uncovers great potential in B.C. to use organic waste resources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and further British Columbia’s clean technology sector and low-carbon economy. Findings from an earlier study released in November 2007 revealed organic waste material found in the Fraser Valley could produce an estimated 120 million cubic meters of biomethane per year, an amount equivalent to the diesel consumed by 80,000 cars or 100 million litres.

Other BCIC projects underway include a study exploring the cultivation of microalgae to produce most of B.C.’s diesel needs (with findings to be released later this year). BCIC has also assembled two advisory groups composed of members from industry, government, and academia to develop programs that address the need for commercially viable energy alternatives.

To download a copy of the study, titled “Feasibility Study: Biogas Upgrading and Grid Injection in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia”, visit www.bcic.ca/industry/life-sciences/biorefining.

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About BCIC

The British Columbia Innovation Council (BCIC) advances innovation and commercialization of applied science and technology in partnership with government, industry and academia. By supporting all levels of education, BCIC is focused on developing talented British Columbians. Building a strong future for the knowledge economy is essential to the success of B.C.'s economy. BCIC is a Crown agency of the Province of British Columbia.

For more information about BCIC, visit www.bcic.ca.