



## Robert Hornung

President ▸ Canadian Renewable Energy Association

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**O**n July 1, 2020, the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) and the Canadian Solar Industries Association (CanSIA) united within the Canadian Renewable Energy Association to form one voice for wind energy, solar energy, and energy storage in Canada. *Wind Systems* recently talked with newly appointed CanREA President Robert Hornung about the change and why this next chapter in Canada’s renewable energy sector was a necessary step for the country’s energy future.

### ▸ Why did you feel the time was right to merge into this new organization?

I think there are really three factors: One is that it’s a reflection of the evolution within the membership itself. More and more wind-energy companies are indeed multi-technology companies.

Secondly, as we work to advocate on behalf of the industry, coming together provides us with a stronger and more united voice in terms of going forward. That would be important because, even though our technologies have made really significant progress and moved from margins to mainstream, there’s still a lot more that could be done and still a lot of work to do to make that happen.

And the third reason is that, as we’ve moved to become more mainstream and demonstrated that our technologies are cost competitive, we’re now forced to consider our role as a citizen of the grid more seriously. In particular, we want to address concerns that have been raised around the variable nature of wind and solar generation.

We believe that there are tremendous synergies between wind energy, solar energy, and energy storage, and by bringing these technologies together, we’re able to provide much more comprehensive solutions for customers — whether they be individuals or corporations or utilities or system operators who want to provide a broad range of services to the grid, not

just energy. We think we can do that more effectively together than separately. We think that would be key to creating new opportunities for all of these technologies going forward.

### ▸ What are your goals as president with this new organization?

Obviously, as with any industry association, we will be involved in advocacy. We will be involved in communications and outreach. We will work to inform and educate both within and outside the membership. We have to be able to go to customers and say, “We understand these are some of the challenges you face. This is how we can help to address those challenges and how, by working together, we can actually provide a more comprehensive solution to some of those challenges for you.”

From our perspective, these technologies should be playing a central role in the transformation of electricity and energy systems going forward in response to a wide variety of drivers that we see in terms of technological change and in terms of customer preferences and obviously, of course, in terms of environmental drivers, like climate change as well. Our overall objective is to ensure that we play a central role in that energy transformation. And from my perspective, that means, as an organization, we have to position ourselves as solutions providers.



► **How will adding solar and energy storage to your mission statement affect wind?**

From our perspective, it helps wind energy in a couple of ways. It comes back to growing the penetration of any of these technologies into the grid. We have to recognize the strengths and weaknesses that each of those technologies have. And we're incredibly fortunate in that there are tremendous synergies available between these technologies.

When we think about the synergies and the complementarity between these technologies, you can look at it in two ways: One is in the form of hybrid projects, which we certainly see growing rapidly in terms of wind and solar in the same facility or solar and batteries or wind and batteries or all sorts of different mixes. But we also consider the complementarity from a system's perspective in the sense that we're not focused on bringing more wind, solar, and storage onto the grid in a project form. We're looking at bringing more of those technologies onto the grid overall, because, even when they're not in the same project, they can help to facilitate the entry of other technologies. Storage is the obvious example there.

Having more storage resources on the grid to manage the variability associated with wind and solar production, regardless of where that storage is placed, opens new opportunities going forward. From our perspective, wind energy was always going to be poised for a significant growth. But wind energy is only going to be part of the story of what the future electricity grid looks like, and in order to grow

the pie for wind energy, we determined that it will actually be easier to do that by working in conjunction with and in collaboration with these other technologies, as opposed to sort of positioning ourselves as competitors.

► **Due to COVID-19 concerns, you recently made the decision to cancel the Electricity Transformation Canada Show. Are you planning on taking some of the scheduled events virtual? And how are you planning that?**

It was an unfortunate decision to have to take, to cancel the show, but it was clearly the right decision. The health and safety of the potential participants or exhibitors in the show has to be the first priority.

We are planning to hold a virtual event in its place, but it won't be Electricity Transformation Canada. This would have been the first edition of Electricity Transformation Canada, and we are determined to ensure that it's launched in a big way when do that in 2021 in Toronto next November.

But as the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, we will hold a virtual event in November of this year. The exact sort of format of that is still being worked on, and we will be releasing details in September in terms of timing and structure of the event. But our goal will be to highlight the role that our core technologies – wind and solar and storage – can play in Canada's energy transformation. ↪

**MORE INFO**

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