

# Saint John looks at geothermal energy for city buildings

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[CBC News](#)

A Nova Scotia company that specializes in geothermal technology wants to take over the heating and cooling systems in five municipal buildings in Saint John.

The system proposed by High Performance Energy Systems Inc. of Halifax would pump cold ocean water into underground holes where it would be stored and then used to cool buildings. It would also capture heat from sewage to warm buildings.

The company has proposed doing that for five buildings in the port city: Harbour Station, the Aquatic Centre, the new law courts, the police facility and Market Square.

William Edwards, commissioner of buildings and inspection services for the city, said Tuesday the system helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduces costs to Saint John.

"We intend to reduce our energy consumption for city-owned facilities by 30 per cent. And we intend, in the immediate future, to reduce the rest of the community non-owned city facilities by a minimum of six per cent — which is a substantial decrease. That's going to take some work," Edwards said.

Saint John city council has asked for a feasibility study, and if it agrees to buy the system, it could be in place by 2010.

The company will come back to city council with an estimate on how much it would cost to build the system.

The city of Halifax is already using a similar set-up to cool five municipal buildings along the Dartmouth waterfront, and Mayor Peter Kelly is happy with the system.

"For us, it has worked well and we are looking to expand it. It will be the way of the future in terms of reducing the environmental footprint, reducing the cost and helping the environment for the long term," Kelly said.

Halifax had projected it would save up to 95 per cent of its cooling costs in those buildings for a saving of \$100,000 per year. The system cost about \$2 million to install.

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