

**Energy Efficiency and Community Energy Systems  
Indigenous Technical Session Discussion Summary**

**Tuesday, October 11, 2016  
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
Kananaskis Room, Delta Hotel South  
135 Southland Drive SE, Calgary**

**In what ways is energy efficiency an important topic to be discussing?**

- Piikani wants to be a main player in generation transmission and distribution. It's no secret that the south has the best wind and solar potential in the province. It would be a great opportunity for Piikani to be the solution to the GoA commitment for the renewable piece.
- Wealth from natural resources development isn't helping First Nations.
- Treaty 7 has the largest reserve lands and population.
- Appreciate the opportunity to speak, Piikani was first to have operating wind turbine. Solar in school, hockey rink, land designated for renewables already, they want to be involved.
- Warren Buffet wants to be involved in a First Nation or Indigenous major renewables project.
- Piikani – [xx]% of Blackfoot voted for NDP. Hoping that the NDP can deliver and not just be lip service for Climate change.
- Groups are not here to pat you on the back and say good job because we haven't seen anything yet.
- On the Piikani First Nation, we see the bills. One of the things is we have no control over the costs of the consumption, no cost on distribution and transmission charges. During last week's meeting with the AUC we talked about due diligence, when people make application for licenses, they go to the provincial AUC. We deal a lot with [utility] in the south, our Elders, what kind of programs are there... We have Elders that live on \$560 a month. Can you live on that and pay bills? How do you get that to become cost-efficient? We need an Elder program. Some First Nations state they take care of their Elders, some can, some can't afford to. How do you control or how do you make energy affordable? Lightbulbs, furnaces, water heaters, electric heaters are very expensive, how do these people afford these upgrades?
- Banks require more than what exists on reserve. The practicality of getting funding is lost. Issues – not just who has ownership
- Do your laundry at midnight, that's what I tell people. We are educating you on what's happening on the reserve. Our houses just barely meet minimum standards.
- Yes education, but very simple language is needed.
- We have an advantage, I send out [xxx] customer bills. I could send them out something in the mail but how many will open their bills?
- We have had last year 3 open houses, my first open house only 1 person, then we had it combined with other departments. Not one asked me about their power bill. If I want them to come talk to me across the table, I can disconnect them. To reconnect them costs \$150 which is almost 3 months' worth of power costs.

**What may support energy efficiency programming for First Nations people and communities? (i.e., opportunities)**

- Different areas of programming do not talk to each other.

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- Infrastructure and housing – streamline one application for housing and include all the programming and funding available in one application.
- We need to look at the big picture when the panel makes recommendations.
- Sooke BC First Nation, they didn't get some non-native company, they brought in an expert and they trained the communities to be able to do the work needed.
- Geothermal band offices, lots of examples of other wins, let's look at them, what did they have to do, what did they learn, what would be done different later and better next time for continued success? How do we share that learning and knowledge.
- Stressing that this is an information session, not consultation.
- Housing is getting billed from companies for 8 locations, 5 locations whatever, then the bills get so high, and they end up going to collections. Why are they able to make bills saying 5 locations or 8 locations with no description or breakdown? So we can't research the details. Why can they do that? Is there no billing standards?
- I brought this concern up with the AUC. Does the company even have a license to be on the reserve land?
- We need money for our regulatory lawyer to understand First Nation or Indian law.
- It would be better to have panel members that LIVE on reserve, not just being leadership or employed on reserve.
- The panel has made note of the regulatory challenges. That request has been made. What might those challenges be for those on reserve, off settlement, etc.? How do we make these initiatives meaningful to everybody?
- Conservation topics for homes, a First Nation solar farm on First Nation land makes more sense. We should be looking at centralized solar power for the community. In regards to distribution and power security, run that farm, centrally, it could be very helpful to add panels as opportunity presents. From a maintenance perspective it also makes sense.

### **What may get in the way of energy efficiency programming for First Nations people and communities? (i.e., challenges/obstacles)**

- Each Nation has individual challenges. Each Nation governs a bit differently to how they manage covering costs. Who's regulating the changes to pricing? Consistency is that they are on federal reserves.
- Rural Electricity Associations – self govern their own energy systems. There are only 3 First Nations that have REAs. Electric cars – it's like putting a modern engine in a 1950s jalopy car. The province is starting to talk about getting involved in housing on reserves. If they are able to do it they will be light years ahead of all the other previous governments. Our people are younger, more vibrant and more prepared. Two basic barriers. 1. Quality of housing – before looking at energy efficiency. 2. Fact that power companies are operating illegally on First Nations land.
- Power companies should be paying portions of distribution and transmission back to the First Nations.
- Education is key, so hard if you don't understand the entire system and how it works today.
- Regulatory barriers between provincial and federal systems.
- Quality of housing. Homes are older. They are expensive to retrofit. Funding is tight. Every couple of years INAC has a pot of money to retrofit homes. In 2009/10 they also encouraged us to seek provincial dollars for energy efficiency. You need to do an audit before the work gets started and the turnaround time to get an auditor, the timelines are too tight. We couldn't

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access the dollars because we couldn't meet criteria to get the money. Too much paperwork and couldn't meet INAC and CMHC timelines.

- Criteria for qualification to receive programming – needs to be easy.
- How are some of these products like lightbulbs and water heaters... How do people afford new products?
- Energy prices are down as it is. Energy efficiency is an education point, how do you get people educated on this. Agency's responsibility should be to make it cost effective. We know that they save money and over the long term, but it is hard to pay for the upfront cost to get the benefits over the long term.
- Transmission and distribution is very cost prohibitive.
- Recommendation to the AUC was due diligence, [utility] in the south, do they go to the Chief and Council for a license? There is no due diligence. Recognition of the system. [Utility] should be approaching First Nations for licenses to operate. Not the province. The Nations. Everything is based on consumption. We're the ones that have the lines running through and substations, but what do we have for our community members? We don't have those cost of living increases. How do you make it affordable? Getting customers to pay their bills, in the community, how can we get them to the point where they can pay?
- Challenges in different levels of applications. Housing is federal, energy efficiency is provincial. Intergovernmental to apply or qualify and the timeliness aren't talking to each other. Need a one window approach.
- We made a matrix of 40 different funding programs we could apply to. And there's a new one announced every other week. There should be one place to go to access what's available. Pull federal and provincial programming together.
- Catch up on the housing, if the province could match the federal contributions, so many problems could be solved. Renewables could take off and everything could be fast tracked. First Nations traditional lands are generating the funding for the province of Alberta, but we don't get the chance to access it.
- Infrastructure costs money. Power poles and lines to new houses and running gas lines that all costs money. Distribution and transmission is killing the cost benefits of the solar that we have installed.
- Where do we start? Infrastructure.
- Social services doesn't cover the cost of the house. Catch up with housing. More houses needed. [xxxx] needs 1,400 houses to catch up to the population. Lots of people sharing homes, multiple families in a single dwelling. People living in the basement.
- Personal investment in energy efficiency.
- Some people take pride in ownership.
- Band portion – capacity to write the grants is limited. The immediate needs supersede the ability to keep up to all the grants coming out. Energy efficiency seems low on the priority. We have higher priorities, social indicators, addictions, unemployment. If the Nation is paying your bills, the personal incentive to save on energy is not there. That's where we need to focus. Project porch light. Education because there is pride in doing what we can. Energy efficiency is a culturally relevant priority. We don't waste. That's an indigenous way of doing things. How do you bridge the indigenous knowledge at the community level? There should be two parts, one project grant for community and one for the individual. There is no capacity to monitor, report, we have so many other priorities, life and death priorities. Energy efficiency is a nice to have, not a must have.

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- Within BC First Nations clean energy, [xxx] says she helped develop a hydro dam for her community. They have found ways and successes already. Let's look at the exciting things that have been done already. I want my child to have a better world. Let's create a First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund. Let's not reinvent the wheel. Let's keep the reporting requirements down to a minimum. If there's a 40 page document that accompanies a grant, no one will read it. My organization, I don't have anyone to dedicate to these programs and grants. [xxx] pays for their peoples' power. Whereas [xxx], they pay their own. Kids have more influence on the home than we acknowledge. Kids are learning about energy waste in school and helping mom and dad identify energy consumption in the home that is wasteful.
- We have basic home maintenance programs to help homeowners. But we still get calls for changing doorknobs and can you re-light my furnace etc. These programs are good, but not enough. They invited the reserves to Edmonton all last week. Again we submitted over 300 things to get fixed and we got 10. These are drops in the bucket. We need to renovate and refit thousands of houses. We pay lots for insurance and after a fire the amount we are given for a total loss doesn't cover the cost to replace it. I thought it was a joke when they started saying housing is a treaty right. I don't believe it because I don't see it. We need help to rebuild and renovate houses. Not just a few houses.
- Our houses just meet minimum standards, if that, and the wiring/electrical/insulation, water use etc. needs to have higher standards. Getting the word out into the community, those that have never left the reserve, how are we going to educate them? We need laymen's terms.