

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

**Monday, October 17, 2016**

**1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

**Maligne Room, Sawridge Inn**

**4235 Gateway Boulevard, Edmonton**

- Introductions were given by the Chief of Enoch First Nation.
- Praise was given for David Suzuki, particularly his relationships with Indigenous peoples and the respect he had for their ancestors. Just like Indigenous peoples once put a priority on climate and the environment, so too is the rest of the globe.
- Appreciation was expressed for the current government and its current approach, particularly how First Nations communities have been incorporated into the discussion. It is the younger generation that will move away from oil and gas. The solar program is really taking that leadership role. Indigenous communities do not [??] one-off projects, and want to make programs sustainable and maintained in the long-run.
- It is great to see a bunch of people in the same room who have seen a variety of things and are going to be the next climate leaders.
- Introductions to the Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel were given, and a summary of the work undertaken was provided.
- Questions were asked regarding the newly announced solar program. This pilot program would look to provide \$200k/project and would be implemented on community buildings. These panels won't generate enough electricity to sell back to the grid. Input from indigenous communities can help future programming.
- Phase out schedule of coal – what percentage will go back to indigenous communities? Retirement of coal has not been created to date. Treaties predate the creation of Alberta, which created the mechanism for trade. This would be the mountain resources.
- "Apartheid is alive and well in Alberta"; it was hoped that this discussion on climate change provides the opportunities to partner. There are already numerous training programs – it is time for communities to benefit from the land that was stolen from Indigenous peoples. Alberta was created in 1905 and Treaty 6 was signed in 1840, so this predates the creation of Alberta. Indigenous communities want to know that the phase-out of coal communities will result in a stream of benefits for First Nations.
- A mechanism for dealing with jurisdictional issues should be explored if we are to consider energy production on reserves. There should be a way for the federal government to get involved. A duty to consult and inform in a way which is understandable to everyone should be mandated. There is a lack of information provided to Indigenous communities, and a lack of capacity to deal with the various initiatives coming from government.
- Participants commented that allocation of carbon levy dollars was done so without consultation from indigenous communities.
- A panel member stated that part of this engagement was to broaden the educational background of members on initiatives undertaken by the government. While the panel cannot provide questions, it can help spark discussion.
- In relation to implementation there has to be some kind of regulation that does that transaction of dollars or talking about projects that we might want to sell off, and the federal lands vs.

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provincial jurisdictional war if the First Nations have the capacity to develop energy for sale. Needs some sort of mechanism where Canada is involved in the regulations of power sales coming from reserve lands. Indigenous communities are the most vulnerable, and in some instances social assistance pays power bills for people, so how do bands apply for the rebate if the individuals who are applying for these grants get bills payed for them?

- There is a lack of information prior to the meetings, and now members come to meetings and there a pamphlet and a presentation. How do communities engage in these when they have one or two people that are tasked to engage? Lack of capacity is real. It's a challenge.
- Price is \$20 per ton and then it will go up. \$3 billion will be generated and then 50% will go back to Albertans via rebates. And that decision has already been made. It's already been decided for communities - 50% of the money – communities have no say in how it is to be spent and again have already been overstepped and will have to split the money between Albertans. Ensuring all Albertans are included is important but it's not happening at the earliest stage of this carbon levy decision.
- What is the percentage or the breakdown of the money that is being allocated to indigenous communities?
- Solar panel funding – is that program available to private houses?
- What we are talking about today is more energy efficiency focused. There is detailed information on the solar panel program online.
- The cost of providing electricity on reserve is expensive. \$8-\$10K for a single power pole to be installed. We don't have the luxury of having housing and community developers pay for those costs. We pay them. I'm hoping these programs can be applicable for individual houses.
- The agency is going to be a dedicated agency and their job is to design and deliver these types of programs to all Albertans. Including First Nations, and they will do this through incentive programs, education, awareness outreach, audits, etc. The Energy Efficiency Agency does have a budget, approx. \$645 million over 5 years. Starts small at \$45 million and then grows over time. Will hopefully be a sustainable set of programs, and that's the intention of this, for it to be ongoing.
- The GoA established this panel to help setup the Energy Efficiency Agency, it doesn't exist yet, but it's coming on January 1. To help set the stage for the long term vision and we can handoff the recommendations that we hear at these sessions to shape the agency.
- Energy efficiency is a technology, energy conservation, and community energy, solar and alternative energy at that community scale.
- What types of programs would work, the panel's goal is to create that dialogue, there are no wrong questions or wrong topics for conversation. These are open discussions. Will First Nations have representation in the agency? Integrating some prior conversations, what about applications? How will they apply for these programs. What about education programs, how people can access these programs and also the jobs. How do communities get involved in the growing job field of renewables.
- There are a number of task forces and panels created. There will be more moving parts as these roll out. In one sense there is a valuable aspect to having these panels but it makes it complex to comprehend. Indigenous Relations (IR) has its own Climate Change Unit, to incorporate communities, and so communities have opportunity to be involved. It is the panels' job to work with IR and to bring all this information together. Feedback received points to the fact that communities need more capacity and education. They are challenged with moving the money from the carbon levy out into Alberta in an efficient way. There are a bunch of challenges in terms of timing and bringing everything together but the panel wants feedback on how to best

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receive. It is very early on in the process and the panel wants to work in a meaningful manner and give everyone a fair opportunity to provide input and feedback. Budget 2016 illustrates how different money has been allocated. Some bubbles don't have an exact allocation. These are projected dollars, hard to say exactly, but the government will make adjustments as they move along. Through the Climate Leadership Plan there is dedicated funding that will be allocated to IR to implement programming. The amount of funds required is only just beginning. The Minister is having leadership meetings this month to determine what will happen with these dollars for Indigenous communities.

- It was asked if a draft of the report could be provided to indigenous communities before it was distributed. The number and variation of communities involved points to a need to integrate and collaborate, however there are assumptions among communities that the feedback will be lost.
- Indigenous communities are excited after hearing the announcements. The long term implications of our current actions will have a better impact on Mother Earth, and can only be done by individuals now. "It starts with conserving energy in the homes. Our Big Brother the Sun which provides a lot of energy for us." [xxx] has hired members of the community to help put solar panels on roofs.
- It may be the case where a company needs to be formed to help perform Indigenous energy assessments. Developing true partnerships with solar developers and communities is crucial.
- The educational element of recycling programs could lend itself to future programming for either the agency, or other third parties that are contracted out by the government to help broaden citizen's knowledge of energy efficiency.
- Water is a critical component of any resource plan for indigenous communities. There are a lot of challenges on reserve. Some residents can't afford power. Some of this information is for our economic development side, at least on energy assessments.
- Licensing for local economic development is a discussion that we could extend to REAs. REA's structure, especially with the existing utilities, is under discussion with the government. Communities could try and sell less expensive energy to themselves. REAs could be educational sources, with an office to build on what we have on reserve. One of the goals of communities is to bring people back to agriculture as they have lots of non-natives leasing on lands. Do these farmers who lease on reserve qualify for a rebate? Can the First Nation apply for a rebate? When we are talking about energy efficient communities, it is important to look at homes. Communities do not have a partnership with Canada. The utility framework on reserves needs to be addressed.
- Selling electricity back onto the grid could be problematic. Nations could not even get a car dealership on reserve. Will there be legislation or policy to allow Nations to grow and prosper?
- Role of science and technology has the opportunity to enhance Indigenous ways of being. On the flipside, Indigenous communities need the capacity to undertake technological improvements. Programs need to be cost effective, and funds should not be clawed back from INAC if there are savings for energy efficiency. A discussion with the federal government and opportunities with the federal government should be held
- 8 cents/kw for energy coming back onto the grid means that there are little economic activities for Indigenous peoples to put power back onto the grid – or anyone else. Solar panels are being placed on community schools. Pilot projects are nice, but there is a need for strong sustainable funding.
- When you take natural resources, you are stealing from the First Nations. Regional transfer act is another cost of doing business that industry does not want to give up.

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- Is there any partnership with the climate office and Feds? Through the Vancouver Declaration, Pan-Canadian framework, reports will go from premier to prime minister. There is little understanding of how detailed working groups will fit into the federal regime.
- Important to keep it flexible when it comes to creating policy. When we are talking about energy efficiency, we are talking about using less. Are we talking about new home construction? The current grant programs do not typically allow for the flexibility needed for First Nations communities.
- Contemplating subsidizing energy efficient home development and construction. What about public transportation subsidizing on reserve. They don't take into account the environment that First Nations operate in. It's different. First Nations do not get access to the MSI, important to think outside the box. Helps pay for buses and transportation and energy efficiency upgrades. Do not put restrictions on what communities need to do.
- First Nations people looking for business opportunities look on a price per kilowatt basis, but because this province is privatized, there is no real economic development opportunity to generate revenue in the system communities are currently working in. It is not a fair and open market. It is not viable for First Nations to invest their already constrained budget and invest in renewable energy when the province is privatized.
- Housing needs to be addressed. [xxxx] is in the last phase of a solar project at the school. While in the middle of construction, the grant came out. This program is also a pilot; there is a need for real funding for communities that will help put solar on homes to free up money. There are 400 people on reserve, and most are on social assistance, and a good portion is Elders. The community pays utilities for those on social assistance and for Elders. If panels are put up, utilities would not have to be paid for, which could free up money to be invested elsewhere. The question is – will the Feds lessen funding if solar is on the roofs of communities?
- When energy is created in some communities, First Nations see this as stealing it from them. It is a cost of business that industry will not give up. But keep it flexible.
- Was there an environmental scan of previous programs on First Nations? A number of years ago, Feds did program, had a liaison to create awareness. It would be helpful if the scan were shared... worked with the Pembina Institute, one was for renewable energy and posters were made. [xxxx] Nation have looked into the feasibility of energy efficiency on reserve. INAC ran programs that helped improve energy efficiency on reserves in the past, and could help as an information clearing house for different communities.
- A lot of the green initiatives are through INAC, they should be at this table so that this info is accessible. So that we aren't re-inventing the wheel. In the application process INAC might have lots to share.
- Divert utility costs into other programs. Put into social or education program. Agriculture looking at energy, something that could be done is solar farms, wind farms, geothermal, conservation projects, species-at-risk, and plants at risk. Greenhouses could expand the jobs available on reserve and provide a great economic benefit.
- Food is an integral issue for First Nations communities, and is not typically an issue for communities off reserve.
- The priority for First Nations communities is to create jobs and make money for communities.
- The dollars that Canada gave to Alberta so that economic development on First Nations could happen needs to be revisited.
- Technical capacity building on First Nations sometimes has to outmanoeuvre politics for bands. Livelihood should take job creation and wellness into account as a panel. Grant revenue for

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traditional land use studies results in clawbacks for those that help. Current case law mandates governments to put the rights of Indigenous peoples into contracts. Land use framework and land use tables should be used, but the rights of Indigenous peoples should be in the writ. Impact benefit agreements have left smaller communities high and dry. Coexisting relates to harmony and quality. Lack of trading and inclusion of Elders wisdom.

- Best Elders tables have been destroyed. Dr. Wilton and Leroy Little Bear, Albert Yellowknee and Mike Beaver have participated on international groups in the past.
- While Indigenous consultation may slow down a project, it is desired by Indigenous communities, not that it benefits Indigenous communities anyway. Ensure that all future developments, projects, policies, incorporate traditional knowledge and is entrenched in legislation.
- Panel suggested to consider cumulative and Indigenous land use and certainty to Indigenous peoples.
- An Elders advisory panel and a youth advisory panel could be created to help ensure that these recommendations stick.
- Educational programs in K-12 schools are critical. A youth engagement strategy is critical.
- Increased rates will require beneficiaries of rebates to file their tax returns, however the blow for most of these communities will be severe.
- Important that the carbon levy is framed as an incentive.
- Rebates for furnaces, hot water heaters, and insulation would be a priority – anything that can help resist against the costs
- Additional funding on top of what Nations are currently getting on top of the INAC funding. Important that the choice between energy efficient homes and more homes, then this will withstand political risk.
- Important that federal and provincial colleagues are meeting to discuss Indigenous communities. What will overcome the barriers also reduces unemployment – ensure that people don't have to buy trucks, ensuring public transportation.
- Ensure that program extends to houses, not just municipalities.
- A mixed level of programming will ensure that administrative officers and supports for Nations are provided. Nations simply do not have the capacity.
- What will support energy efficiency programming?
- Continued dialogue, ensuring that this is more than a one-time pilot project.
- One thing that keeps coming up, the holistic approach, education youth, housing, heating homes, vulnerable communities, and people. Most don't have high school education. There are programs from INAC to engage youth on science and technology. Social development, housing engagement sessions talking about social development and housing. Power propane and costs of living. The panel should be engaging with INAC and all the folks that First Nations have to deal with. First Nation, Inuit and youth program provides a summer work placement. For [xxx] it's a significant source of funding for science and technology. The panel should recommend programs that the community could use - INAC funding to deliver on. In order for FN people to adopt some of these changes, different initiatives, to see more adoption, more incentives for people, obviously the province is going to rebate to vulnerable people. Various people have provided input. Most of the population is vulnerable, people can't afford their bills during winter.
- Rebates are four times a year. Canadian Revenue Agency will issue them.
- Sometimes there are 3 or 4 families living in one house. How does the money roll out? What mechanism could be in place to ensure that rebates are received? People have to choose

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groceries over power bills. And the cost of living north of Edmonton is higher and the housing is an immediate need. Have to figure out a way that vulnerable people, First Nations people aren't going to be victims of this.

- People are absolutely going to see less money in their pockets. And four times a year for bills isn't enough. With vulnerable people, First Nation people... might need more frequent payments, more than four times a year. Make this affordable. In order to adopt these changes in homes, it's hard for these people not having the background or information. Looking at ways that economic opportunities. Using this for growth opportunities. That will help the adoption of these programs, and some ways for incentives to be established. It's great to give a rebate once a quarter but also have some sort of incentive tied to that to reduce the energy use month over month. Provide an incentive to switch so it's ingrained in the kids and home owners so they can learn how to take advantage of these opportunities. Someone touched on incentives to renovate and retrofit not just with panels but more efficient homes. The [xxx] homes are dilapidated. Insulation is sub-par. Other initiatives to help home owners upgrade houses on reserve, on demand hot water tanks, triple glazed windows. Whatever helps the homeowners reduce bills. Furnaces, hot water heaters. Offset the increase in costs.
- Communities don't have to choose between new housing and more efficient homes. ICF and greater insulation. There needs to be additional funding in place to help offset the cost of building more efficient houses. Make it so the same number of homes can be built and be built better. If the province could talk to INAC that might be beneficial. The third party agency... will there be a branch dedicated towards First Nations specifically? There would be a board and chair and a CEO the entire program is delivering programs in 2017.
- Other quick ideas –remoteness reduces the barriers to employment - could tie in other programs that can get people to work in an environmental ways to get to work, more people working, will help people. More discussion between this panel and the Feds. There are so many different examples on different policy and regulations weather it is federal or provincial. Expanding this program to houses and residencies would be helpful.
- Funding analysis, consultation is expected to be everything. Very under capacity. I think that an administration officer needs to be upgraded. Communities just don't have the capacity. I have no answers. It's great to have grants but it's hard to oversee them.
- What may support energy efficiency programing, youth and elder advisory panel, keeping continued dialogue so that this is not a onetime pilot program? Any thoughts on what the government can do moving forward?
- More communication is needed.