

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

**Thursday, October 13, 2016
1:00 pm – 4:00pm
McArthur Room, McArthur Place
10307 – 100 Ave, Lac La Biche**

Why do you feel that we have a conflict of interest on the Energy Efficiency Panel?

- One of the panel members is a Stantec employee. Stantec can only earn to gain with development and consulting services as they have full access to this information. We have an issue with positioning Stantec this way and see it as a large conflict of interest.
- All panel members have signed confidentiality agreements to prevent conflicts arising. These are just recommendations, we have First Nation members on the panel and at the moment it is just making recommendations, not decisions.

How could we better mitigate conflict of interest on the panel keeping in mind confidentiality agreements have been signed?

- You cannot make people in corporations panel members because they stand to directly benefit from municipal sector projects by having full information on the initiatives while other smaller companies do not.
- To ensure there is no conflict of interest there should be a basic public test, where they go through and see if they have any conflict of interest before being appointed as panel members for any initiative. This test would include questions that would prevent panel members that may have a conflict of interest. We believe in the importance of these GoA initiatives and do not want to see them lose credibility due to very preventable oversights.
- There is a bad history with Stantec and we will not engage in projects with them. They left with private information after completing projects. When we tried to recover the information and we were told litigation would be the only way to get the information back. They also put our community into a huge conflict of interest by forcing people to provide false TEK information to suit their needs for projects in the area.
- We would like to see an audit program once consultation is complete to ensure it is more meaningful and free of conflicts of interest.
- We would recommend that the processes after this engagement session to be a black box and all information collected be sent directly to the minister for review.
- Once the panel has completed, we would like the Chiefs to meet with the Ministers involved and go over these and other initiatives.

An agency is going to be formed to look at energy efficiency and micro-generation. This is not going to encompass industrial-scale projects. What considerations would you suggest to the agency to better serve First Nation communities?

- Microgen regulation is currently set at a maximum of 1 megawatt. Anything over this is considered industrial energy production. We will not be able to profit from that production level. Even though 1 megawatt is a lot when considering individual production it is not when you look at community-level production.
- First Nations would like to see the MGR evaluated so that we can get a fair value back for power produced from renewable energy sources that we invest in. The MGR should include larger scale

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projects up to 5 mw so First Nations can utilize this program as a valuable profit center on reserve for long-term economic development. We would like to see larger projects included in a new MGR that has a streamlined review and permitting process. First Nations are unequipped to develop and seek success with larger-scale renewable projects outside of a revamped MGR, to the degree that corporations are equipped to develop larger projects.

The microgen regulations need to be in place by the end of the year. We have identified grey area of 1 to 5 megawatts of generation but are not ready to look into it yet. Instead do we make it easy to come into the power pool?

- We want energy capacity distributed province wide and no fee access to the power grid. It is unacceptable that agricultural buildings are able to connect to the power grid without fees and First Nations have to pay fees for all buildings.
- First Nations want to see a better system for charging transmission and distribution fees that will not act as a deterrent towards the uptake in small-scale grid-connected energy generation.

How can we ensure the agency works collaboratively with First Nation communities?

- You guarantee a seat on the board for an elected First Nation representative as First Nations make up at least 5% of the population. We want an open process to elect someone to fill that seat on the board. Grassroots process will make information more relevant to people. The board needs to come to terms with governance under the Indian Act. Council doesn't always represent the community as it does in democratic systems, it privileges individual family groups over the whole. When you elect panel members they should be elected by all First Nations.
- At this point in time, the panel does not have the authority/ability to elect board members. We can make recommendations to include a board member that was elected through a grassroots system.
- Using Confederacy will introduce bias into the panel.

There is a possibility of preferential treatment in deciding a member representing First Nations onto the board. How could we avoid this?

- We suggest that all community members need to come together to choose the board member they want to designate so they can choose who they feel is best suited to represent us. Once all communities have elected their candidate from the grassroots system, there should be a vote to choose who should represent all of us.

How can we help create/promote capacity building in First Nation communities with the energy efficiency programs?

- Identifying different education and training modules that can relate to the needs of each community for the Energy Efficiency program.
- There could be an opportunity to fund programs where specifically trained/certified people train community members in the skills needed for work in energy efficiency. This will help build community capacity by promoting new jobs/business within the community.
- We want to see public benefit to reserves by enforcing some sort of metric structure system for engaging with industry so that we use our own people for projects if we have the people certified to do that work.
- Capacity can be identified and monitored by creating a database inventory determining individuals' and community member's capacity for different fields of work so we can establish the baseline of capacity in the communities.

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- We want to create the expertise in the First Nations peoples because it is the best place to build capacity for First Nations and rural industries. First Nations have deep ties in their communities and will stay there to work, instead of moving away once they have the training.
- For capacity and training, we want to know what are the credentials stipulated and why are they required for the program.
- Municipal programs need to have an engineer, energy manager or energy auditor involved so there is accountability and to ensure they have the appropriate skills. They have professional liability to conduct good work as that is a process of removing people conducting sub-par work from continuing to work in that field. There needs to be a pathway so that First Nations can provide these services too. This can begin with Energy Advisor training in consideration that these energy services are going to be valuable for Alberta's future.
- To be clear, every home on a Nation is owned by the community, so the community-owned buildings within the energy efficiency program should be changed to facilities and not residential if it is not open to housing.
- We want this program to expand to the commercial entities that are owned by the community.
- In Alberta there are currently seven home energy auditors. They have been approved by natural resources. In the recent past a market was created for energy auditors, the funding was eventually pulled and auditors left. There is a potential for a niche market in the future with this program.
- People want jobs through this. We need to train these people for the required skills and for other systems as well (like getting licenses, education and assisting in other capacities also). We need to leverage these communities successfully and work with post-secondary with the credentials needed to build capacity on multiple forms of entry within the communities.
- Financial. The social utility of money. On reserve, there is huge wealth disparity where the people who need the financial incentive will earn to gain the most and will respond the best. On most First Nations utilities are paid by the band so there is no real incentive to becoming energy efficient. Use a band-wide perspective, this is just one bill. Let the bands find out where best to invest that capital. There is a need for residential homes that are new and energy efficient. If we can design a not-for-profit way for managing that money for homes there will be 100% interest.
- Get more out of new energy efficient builds than current buildings on reserves.
- The incentive needs to be adaptable to the specific needs of the community.
- If we reallocate the money and create housing for First Nations it would be a big win for us.

If communities can use the money saved from utility costs by utilizing the energy efficiency programs, wouldn't the funds saved be used to increase funding in other programs within the communities?

- Is this pilot program is a dead-end, is there a next step or is there not? Are you saying the provincial government is going to commit to putting money to residential homes on reserves?
- If we can afford to make new homes and put our own transformers on our lands then there will be buy-in.
- To develop a house and develop the community you need input from members so they can feel that it is their home. If the people who the house is going to help with building it, then there will be more appreciation and care because it will be seen as their home.
- What if we were to set up a charitable organization to generate money through the grid by generating electricity to put all that capital to building new homes?
- If it is agency operated, those profits to be re-invested into programs to help with housing development.
- Need to be able to address others ideas and approaches.

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- All people were happy suggesting that the profits would go outside the political system.
- The system as it is is not worth utilizing the current opportunities. Look into generating profits from this program, fixed prices and tariffs to recovering capital from this project.

Why would using this funding for individual housing, instead of increasing the efficiency of non-residential community buildings, increase individuals adopting more energy efficient lifestyles?

- An incentive program through matching funds needed for housing renovations is something that can work. This would make it easier for people to buy into being energy efficient.
- The housing issue needs to be addressed in Alberta. We have a federal program that doesn't fund all the money to build a new house. If the GoA paid the extra cost to make a First Nation CFC home energy efficient, we can build the same amount of homes each year that would be better for our people and the environment.
- We also need a community plan for energy efficiency to get the information out there.
- This will help internalize the capacity in the Nation.
- Someone at the GoA needs to fund external affairs offices so that we don't run deficits, especially on housing because we are paying more of our money towards the affairs staff capacity. The GOA makes all of these decisions without caring about our needs.

How can we help navigate cross-jurisdictional issues better?

- You need to fund this. Totally unacceptable for government to dilly-dally on projects related to housing, capacity building, mental health.
- I've been to so many input sessions for programs that don't come about. To get the First Nations at the table we need the investment up front or we won't participate.
- First Nations have to consult on industry activity on their land. The GOA wants to collaborate by engaging with us. This costs us more resources as there is more consultation happening. When you do this, you put the responsibility on the First Nation so it cannot be done meaningfully because we don't have the capacity. We need professionals and the tools to properly defend and respond to effective engagement in programs like energy efficiency (reinvest into the community, have professionals in the community that can build and offer these services).
- The Energy Efficiency Agency needs to be organization that represents the community members that are grassroots elected to continue these engagements to create better/diverse dialogue for the different areas for communications for First Nations.
- Alberta is entering a new era; build the capacity in First Nations because that person will stay in that community to work.
- You can accomplish more with more flexibility and discretion, finalize success with that. The agency needs to be mindful of the federal programing. Anything that the federal program is doing can be followed by the provincial government to make this approach more effective.