Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce

stronger business together

May 1, 2023

IESO
P2D.Consultation@ontario.ca

To Whom It May Concern:

Environmental Registry Posting: IESO Pathways to Decarbonization Study ERO 019-6647

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and advice on the Environmental Registry posting regarding the IESO's Pathways to Decarbonization Report (P2D).

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce welcomes this opportunity to express our support for the development of new hydroelectric generation in Ontario by private, Indigenous, municipal and government owned developers as well as partnerships between the range of owners. This range and diversity of ownership is already the case for Ontario's 224 existing hydroelectric facilities and is a core strength of the industry in the province. Ontario's heritage hydroelectric fleet moderates electricity prices today and the planned and predictable addition of new hydro (expansions, upgrades, retrofits and greenfield) will have the same effect for decades to come.

It is our expectation that, particularly for new northern hydro development, Indigenous communities will be proponents of or partners in projects. Government policy dating back thirty (30) years requires this approach in Ontario's Northern Rivers (Attawapiskat, Winisk, Albany, Severn) and provides for "Co-Planning" in the Moose River Basin. While early engagement is certainly expected, equally important is ongoing engagement as a project moves from a high-level concept to the planning and potential development stages. Hydroelectric development can create lasting economic and social benefits to Indigenous communities and enable other significant regional economic benefits.

We agree with the P2D recommendations that "Sector partners should begin planning and siting work to identify potential new hydroelectric projects", and "Preliminary work should begin now so that options are available for the future." This will require policy alignment and capacity across provincial government agencies with regulatory responsibilities relevant to predevelopment, environmental assessment and permitting.

Experience suggests that a planned and predictable approach to predevelopment, procurement and permitting that begins now and is implemented over a decade or more will best ensure a cost-effective build out of hydroelectric resources. There is a need to re-establish and sustain the capacity of the industry, partners and communities to reduce costs over time.

Sincerely,

Charla Robinson
President