

Feedback Response to Integrated Energy Resource Plan Consultation

Moose Cree First Nation is a Cree First Nation (MCFN) community located on Moose Factory Island, at the southern end of James Bay in northern Ontario, Canada. The Moose Cree people are part of the larger Mushkegowuk Council, which represents various Cree communities in the James Bay region. The community is known for its strong cultural heritage and efforts to preserve and revitalize the Cree language and traditions. The community also places a strong emphasis on maintaining its connection to the land and upholding sustainable practices. MCFN is also actively involved in various economic and environmental initiatives, including partnerships for clean energy projects and conservation efforts within their traditional territory.

As the Community Energy Champion (CEC) for MCFN, I am dedicated to advocating for renewable energy solutions and fostering sustainable practices within our community. My role is focused on aligning energy projects with our community's needs and values, ensuring they deliver benefits such as economic development, energy independence, and environmental stewardship.

My work directly impacts our community by collaborating on renewable energy projects, enhancing local energy literacy, and ensuring equitable access to energy resources. I see myself as a bridge between the Ministry of Energy (MOE) and our community, working to amplify Indigenous leadership and participation in shaping energy policies that reflect our priorities.

I look forward to engaging and collaborating with the MOE in the future to achieve our shared goals of sustainability, affordability, and energy innovation.

Overarching Question

What policy options and actions should the government consider in the integrated energy resource plan to achieve Ontario's vision for meeting growing energy needs, keeping energy affordable and reliable, ensuring customer choice, and positioning us to be an energy superpower?

The government should prioritize a balanced energy mix that includes renewable energy, enhanced grid infrastructure, and Indigenous-led projects. Policies should focus on:

1. Promoting energy sovereignty for Indigenous communities by enabling direct participation in energy planning and decision-making. Indigenous communities must have direct participation in energy planning and decision-making processes. The biomass project already underway in MCFN stands as a model for success, demonstrating the potential for renewable energy to align with community goals.

2. Investing in renewable energy projects, such as biomass, solar, and wind, which align with environmental goals while fostering economic opportunities.
3. Ensuring affordability by scaling up energy efficiency programs for households and businesses, reducing consumption costs.

Planning for Growth

1. What actions should be prioritized to enhance planning across natural gas, electricity, and other fuels?

- Integrating renewables into the system to reduce reliance on fossil fuels while maintaining reliability. Natural gas as a fuel source in remote communities is not feasible due to logistical and economic challenges, making it essential to focus on renewable energy alternatives such as solar, wind, and biomass.
- Strengthening collaboration among stakeholders, including Indigenous communities, to ensure equitable planning, access and transparency. Promote direct contact with members from First Nation communities, seeking feedback and long-term collaboration.

2. Are there opportunities to enhance the province's approach to procuring electricity generation supply to better serve this priority?

Yes, Ontario should:

- Prioritize Indigenous-owned and -led energy projects, which align with reconciliation and sustainability goals. Indigenous-owned projects refer to energy initiatives where Indigenous communities maintain majority ownership, decision-making power, and control over the resources and revenues. Indigenous-led projects involve initiatives where Indigenous communities take a leading role in planning, development, and management, ensuring their perspectives and priorities are central to the project's success.
- Incentivize long-term contracts for renewables, to promote affordability and stability.

3. What actions should government consider to promote greater access to electricity and accelerate grid-connections?

- Offer incentives for rural and remote areas to connect to the grid, especially Indigenous communities reliant on diesel. Programs like the Indigenous Energy Support Program through IESO that funds and support energy projects to ensure

expansion of such initiatives to help Indigenous communities continue to evolve with renewable energy.

4. What steps can the government take to ensure that transmitters have the certainty they need while keeping costs low?

- Engage Indigenous communities as partners in transmission projects, which can streamline development and align interests. Recognize that relationships with Indigenous communities are core to future transmission expansion, fostering collaboration and trust for mutual success.

5. What policy guidance should the government provide regarding natural gas and low-carbon alternatives?

- Upgrading infrastructure in Indigenous communities to accommodate new technologies, especially regarding low-carbon alternatives.
- Develop clear goals and support programs to encourage adoption of sustainable energy solutions, ensuring Indigenous participation in the planning, implementation, and management of these advancements.

6. How can the government best support Indigenous leadership and participation in energy planning and projects?

- Fund capacity-building initiatives and technical training in renewable energy. Include early and frequent engagement with Indigenous communities by the MOE to ensure their input is integrated throughout the process.
- Prioritize Indigenous-led projects in funding and procurement programs.
- Collaborate with Indigenous communities to share decision-making responsibilities in energy planning.

7. What cooperation opportunities exist across jurisdictions?

- Build connections with neighboring provinces and states to trade clean energy more easily. Ensure that transmission projects crossing over traditional territories include early and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities to respect their rights and integrate their perspectives into the development process.
- Share best practices and resources for renewable energy development and integration, focusing on transparency with Indigenous communities.

8. What types of technical information and forecasts would best support sector participants and energy consumers?

- Data on renewable energy potential, forecasts and cost predictions.

Affordable and Reliable Energy

1. What further steps should the government take to enable informed energy use?

- Expand energy literacy programs to help consumers understand bills, efficiency measures, and renewable options.
- Provide real-time data tools, such as apps or portals, for monitoring energy consumption and costs. Mandate distributor support to Indigenous communities to enable transparency.

3. How can the government empower customers to install innovative technologies?

- Provide grants and tax credits for solar panels, battery storage, and smart home systems. The IESP Program through IESO provides funding to Indigenous communities for renewable energy projects and moving toward clean energy transition.

4. What specific actions could position DERs to support system needs?

- Facilitate and promote policies that encourage the adoption of DERs for Indigenous communities. MCFN is actively pursuing solar energy opportunities to benefit the community by reducing reliance on external power sources, lowering energy costs, and promoting sustainable practices.

5. What actions can maintain an affordable energy system?

- Expand energy efficiency retrofits for homes and businesses.
- Promote community-owned renewable energy projects to reduce costs and share benefits locally.

Becoming an Energy Superpower

1. What opportunities should Ontario consider as a clean energy leader?

- Leverage Indigenous knowledge and stewardship in renewable energy projects. The MOE should play an active role in mandating Indigenous-led projects by establishing policies that require their inclusion in energy initiatives, ensuring that Indigenous voices and expertise shape Ontario's clean energy future.