



Climate Aligned Energy Framework Ministerial Roundtable

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation

Thank you for the opportunity to send written notes in follow-up to the roundtable that BCFED President Sussanne Skidmore participated in on December 6, 2023. We are excited to see the BC government working on climate aligned energy initiatives and look forward to contributing more as this framework continues to be developed.

1. What opportunities and challenges do you see for BC's clean energy future based on the information presented today?

- We have affiliates with workers in every sector of the economy, including resource-based workers that will be impacted by energy transitions, so these labour unions and their workers need to be front and centre in these conversations.
- There are huge opportunities for climate jobs in BC's clean energy future by building up the renewable energy sector, but we need to ensure that these are good, unionized, family-supporting jobs and careers – as oil and gas jobs have been traditionally.
 - Government needs to intentionally plan projects as this is a critical opportunity to bring benefits to rural communities that are suffering due to industry closures: what industry and where will it be located for the most worker and community benefits?
 - Government needs to consider supply chain and procurement for materials needed to build clean energy infrastructure, e.g., wind turbines, and use BC products and manufacturing, when possible, e.g., local steel; or build supply chains through public investment where it does not currently exist.
- The skilled labour shortage is a significant challenge: we need increased investment in union training institutes and a comprehensive training plan to increase meaningful support for targeted and defined pathways into new and emerging sectors.
 - Government needs to ensure that the skills training for clean energy jobs provided through *StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan* is focused on enhancing, not replacing, skilled trade certifications; and that the future skills grant is available to those accessing training through union programs.
 - Government needs to continue funding BCCWITT to build inclusive workplaces; and provide funding to other labour training and education initiatives to enhance inclusion in their existing programs.

- In this work, government needs to reaffirm their legislated mandate to fulfill the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and its commitment to free, prior and informed consent for all impacted Indigenous peoples with regard to any expansion of new energy infrastructure and associated critical minerals mining.

2. What do you consider to be the highest value and best use for BC's low carbon energy resources?

- In considering the *transition in energy* to low-carbon energy resources, there is a simultaneous need to enhance *energy efficiency* so that we are getting the highest value and best use out of those low carbon resources:
 - **Buildings:** We recommend that you support MoveUP's proposal for a new made-in-BC agency that coordinates energy retrofits as there are many benefits including a strong equity approach and economies of scale for cost reduction; this should be expanded beyond an *information* one-stop-shop to include full *implementation* with unionized contractors and BC Building Trades skilled tradespeople;
 - We caution against micro-credentials for implementation, for example, heat pump installation (UA516 recommends adding that to HVAC/R trade certification);
 - The proposal's shift from household level planning to neighbourhood level allows different energy options, such as networked geothermal, which is being tested successfully in US by groups such as HEET: [Networked Geothermal - HEET](#); this provides good transition pathways for UA (and other trades) workers to maintain good jobs and careers;
 - **Transportation:** the focus in the backgrounder is on EVs but we need a significant cultural shift and public investment in a comprehensive, affordable, accessible and public (not private, contracted out) transit system that connects BC, both within and between communities;
 - In both areas, there is an opportunity for government to take a leadership role and prioritize improving energy efficiency in public buildings such as schools, libraries, community centres and government offices, and public transportation fleets, such as emergency services and local government;
- In relation to hydrogen and carbon management systems:
 - Clean hydrogen should be supported in hard-to-reach sectors where direct electrification is not an option, such as the production of cement and steel, and heavy-duty transportation and shipping; globally, 99.6% of hydrogen is produced from fossil fuels so we need to ensure we are investing in clean hydrogen in BC; and

- BC Government's Climate Solutions Council, which has two labour representatives, cautions against relying too heavily on carbon offsetting and carbon management technology and systems. While negative emissions technologies and systems may be useful in specific contexts (such as the production of cement and steel), the focus must be on government initiatives that encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

3. What is the most critical change that government should consider when building a clean, inclusive, and competitive energy future for BC?

- We welcome recent investments in a low-carbon future (e.g., in hydrogen, battery plants, forestry value-added manufacturing) but urge the government to tie public investments to family-supporting, unionized jobs and careers, with priority for impacted workers within resource-intensive industries and equity-seeking groups, as well as community benefits.
- There is also an opportunity for public ownership of our public resources so that all British Columbians benefit from this industrial revolution not just the private sector; government should take a leadership role instead of a solely market-driven approach.

Thanks again for the opportunity to participate both in person and in writing. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have further questions and we look forward to the BCFED and our affiliates being active participants in this initiative.