

# Generation Energy Halifax Roundtable Report

Halifax – June 22, 2017



# Executive Summary

On June 22, the Minister of Natural Resources Canada led a roundtable discussion on Atlantic Canada's long-term energy future at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS with 15 participants including students, academics, indigenous representatives, energy consultants, and civil society. Terry Hubbard, Director General, Petroleum Resources Branch, supported in facilitating the discussion.

## ROUNDTABLE OVERVIEW

The Minister set the context and invited each participant to share their views on one broad question:

- What is your vision for Canada's energy future (with a focus on Atlantic Canada)?

After hearing from each participant, the Minister asked for even broader perspectives:

- What is your vision beyond your areas of expertise, beyond the present, and beyond Canada (internationally)?

## KEY INSIGHTS

1. Continued investments in R&D are needed to create further innovations in areas like renewable power, electricity capabilities, and waste heat solutions (e.g. energy storage).
2. Engagement and inclusion of municipalities in energy decision-making is necessary for change, as they have the most direct link to citizens.
3. Paths forward must be based on regional diversity – policy options and solutions need to be tailored to specific provinces and communities.
4. Governments need to find ways to evoke behavioural change in companies and individual citizens, focusing on energy efficient practices and alternative methods of transportation.
5. Shifts in sources of energy supply is only one part of the story – economic and societal changes are also needed to help transition Canada to a low-carbon future (e.g. re-training oil and gas workers for the renewables sector).

## POINTS TO REGISTER

### Theme: Technology and Innovation

- **Key Insight 1:** Continued investments in R&D are needed to create further innovations in areas like renewable power, electricity capabilities, and waste heat solutions.
  - Intermittent renewables (e.g. wind and solar) are decreasing in price and becoming more accessible, but energy storage capacity is needed in order to fully integrate these into Canada's electricity system. "Energy storage that only adds incremental cost for consumers is a game changer".
  - Electricity is increasingly becoming the "common currency of energy" in terms of development of renewables and electrification of transportation. In order to continue to facilitate this transition, Canada needs to focus on electricity interconnections across the country (e.g. to support electric vehicle infrastructure). This will require a greater amount of cooperation among provinces and territories.
  - Taking advantage of the energy Canada is already producing to create something of added value was also mentioned as an important solution (e.g. waste heat solutions).
  - Need to strive to use the best available technology or energy source at any given moment. For example, if LNG as a transition fuel is the best option rather than going straight to renewables, it must be economically justified for that period of time.
    - It is also important to identify strengths and weaknesses of different technologies and learn from these to create something effective.

### Theme: Community Engagement

- **Key Insight 2:** Engagement and inclusion of municipalities in energy decision-making is necessary for change, as they have the most direct link to citizens.
  - There was significant discussion around the important role of municipalities and communities in Canada's energy transition from the ground-up.
  - Municipalities have the closest link to citizens and a greater understanding of their community needs. It was also



identified that “60% of energy is used at the community level”, indicating that this is where the greatest impact can be made.

- Increased ‘democratization’ or decision-making by communities and individuals is needed – meaning the ability to choose and have access to options and technologies that work for them.

### Theme: Regional Diversity

- **Key Insight 3:** Paths forward must be based on regional diversity – policy options and solutions need to be tailored to specific provinces and communities.
  - “No cookie-cutter solutions” - the combination of actions needed for Canada’s energy transition will need to be different for regions and communities across the country. Governments need to work together on varying policy solutions; this is particularly important for Indigenous communities.
  - Participants pointed to Atlantic Canada’s opportunity to advance its work in renewables and clean technologies (e.g. tidal power, smart grids) for the benefit of Canada. It is important for these provinces to have access to funding options like the Low Carbon Economy Fund to continue this work.

### Theme: Behavioural Change

- **Key Insight 4:** Governments need to find ways to evoke behavioural change in companies and individual citizens, focusing on energy efficient practices and alternative methods of transportation.
  - There was significant discussion around the need for an increased focus on energy efficiency and alternative transportation.
  - Energy efficiency is the cheapest option to meet Canada’s climate change targets, as other renewable technologies do not yet have the capability.
  - To do this, governments need to think about ways to influence the mindsets and behaviours of Canadians “to get them more focused on valuing the ecosphere”, through incentives and co-benefits. Recognition of the good things Canada is already doing was also mentioned as a form of inspiration for citizens.



- Participants also identified supporting local products and reducing imported goods where possible as a means to reduce transportation emissions. They also pointed to European countries (e.g. Norway) as having policies and best practices to promote more efficient transportation (e.g. electric vehicles, public transportation, biking infrastructure).

### Theme: Economic and Societal Change

- **Key Insight 5:** Shifts in sources of energy supply is only one part of the story - economic and societal changes are also needed to help transition Canada to a low-carbon future.
  - Need to identify the impacts of different types of energy production on the environment and the economy for different regions. It is important to know what the legacy effects and policy lessons learned are from previous projects, as well as the opportunities going forward.
  - What the industries are in a province or region will make a big difference for Canada's energy future. Citizens are concerned about the affordability and safety of energy, but also the impacts on jobs and communities.
  - There is a need to demonstrate co-benefits of the transition in order to ensure buy-in (e.g. re-training oil and gas workers for the renewables sector).