

Generation Energy Public Confidence Workshop Report

Ottawa – June 6, 2017



Executive Summary

On June 6, officials from Natural Resources Canada joined Positive Energy in welcoming roughly 30 participants from universities, energy companies, ENGOs, other government departments, Indigenous organizations and think tanks to a public confidence workshop for Generation Energy. Opening remarks were provided by Philip Jennings, Associate Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada. The workshop was facilitated by Monica Gattinger, Chair, Positive Energy.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The workshop addressed a series of questions:

- What factors will shape public confidence in energy development over the next generation?
- What are the challenges and opportunities of the key issues identified?
- What actions could we potentially undertake to ensure public confidence as we make the transition to a low carbon energy future? What outcomes can support long-term policy?

KEY INSIGHTS

1. Public inclusion and participation in energy development and decision-making is needed to foster engagement from the ground up and build confidence in the energy transition
 - Public engagement is important to develop a common vision for Canada's energy future and ensure that Canadians' values are reflected in policy.
2. There is a large role for leadership in the clear articulation of a shared vision. Consultations are only the first step – governments need to develop clear policies, define common outcomes, and most importantly demonstrate results to ensure the public's confidence over the next generation.
3. The risk of increasing polarization and deepening public mistrust is a key factor shaping confidence. Improved communication and transparency to inform the dialogue and the transition to a low carbon economy is necessary.
 - Demonstrating the value equation of a project is more important than engaging in cost-benefit analyses, and can create a basis for shared understanding and an opportunity for negotiation.
4. Achieving emissions targets is only one component of the energy transition. To maintain public confidence, it is important that energy is affordable and accessible for Canadians.
 - Look at different ways of doing business in energy – new business models should be explored to create co-benefits for local communities, particularly in the case of Indigenous communities.

POINTS TO REGISTER

Theme: Citizen Engagement

- **Key Insight 1:** The public's engagement and inclusion in decision-making is important to develop a common vision for Canada's energy future to ensure that Canadians values are reflected in policy.
 - This is particularly important in the case of Indigenous and local communities, as an opportunity to increase the breadth of knowledge that is considered in policy development (e.g. mapping of traditional medicinal plants in Indigenous communities to include as key areas for protection and mitigation measures).
 - The establishment of mechanisms for decision-making that emphasize inclusion of local and Indigenous communities was a key recommendation for government actions to foster confidence (e.g. co-management - the sharing of power and responsibility between the government and local resource users).
 - While public engagement practices cost more and require significant resources, the return would be shorter approval times and higher rates of public acceptance. This process would build and maintain trust over time.

Theme: Leadership

- **Key Insight 2:** A consistent theme was the need for leadership in the transition to a low carbon economy.
 - There was significant discussion around the need for a shared vision.
 - “Governments need to put their money where their mouth is” – federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments need to collectively identify common outcomes, articulate clear policies and deliver results. Accordingly, the establishment of a common vision and delivery on outcomes fosters public confidence in the transition.



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- There was discussion on whether government is best placed to lead the energy transition or if there should be leadership outside of government. Policy leadership in energy and climate change is important for the creation of a common vision, but there is also a role for stakeholders and the public to play in leading this.
- Government provides the process for reviews and implementation of change, however, it is time for a fundamental rethink of our regulatory models. The 20th century institutions that are in place do not align with 21st century challenges, and perhaps governments need to think about a different way of doing things.
 - Many participants noted the amount of concurrent federal regulatory reviews taking place and expressed concern with the overlap between recommendations. They questioned how implementation of change would proceed in a practical way.

Theme: Transparent and Evidenced-Based Information

- **Key Insight 3:** Transparent public communication of evidence that informs decision-making is a key element of confidence. It can serve to reassure Canadians that sound facts are informing the energy transition to a low-carbon economy, and counter many other sources of information in the public domain that polarize the debate.
 - Currently, Canada is faced with fragmentation and polarization, where people do not seem to have the same values or paths to a vision and engage in a constant process of realignment.
 - The dialogue lacks a consistent source of evidence-based information and data. Canadians would benefit from an independent source of energy information that can support the broader discourse on costs and benefits of energy.
 - Demonstrating the value equation is more important than engaging in cost-benefit analyses and can create a basis for shared understanding and an opportunity for negotiation. Values may be aligned when people do not realize it, which can establish the basis for agreement on common outcomes.



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- Providing transparency, particularly around consultation and engagement (for example reporting out not just "What we heard", but rather "what we heard, what we're doing and not doing, and why" with a clear rationale for decision-making).
- Move away from consultation in silos (e.g. subject matter experts), to a more deliberative format that allows for people with different perspectives to debate with a direct influence on outcomes.

Theme: Affordability

- **Key Insight 4:** Energy affordability will be a long-term benchmark of success in Canada's energy future. It is not just about achieving emissions targets and moving to more sustainable practices – to maintain public confidence, there is a need to ensure that energy is affordable and accessible.
 - Look at different ways of doing business in energy – new business models should be explored to create co-benefits for local communities, particularly in the case of Indigenous communities.