



June 4, 2019

## **INFORMATION RELEASE – BCUC Hosts Community Input Sessions for Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry**

VANCOUVER – The British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) is hosting a series of ten Community Input Sessions across BC in June and early July regarding its inquiry into the regulation of Indigenous utilities in British Columbia. On June 3, 2019 the BCUC began its Community Input Sessions in Cranbrook, BC on the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation and heard valuable insights from participants.

During the session, the Panel heard about: a large solar project planned for the area; the importance of economic development, economy building, and self sufficiency for Indigenous communities; the desire for communities to establish strategic partnerships possibly with existing energy providers; the need to build greater capacity, particularly amongst young people; the variety of opportunities that are unique to the regions of the province based on the land and resources in each area; and, some of the impediments that are facing Indigenous energy or utility projects.

The inquiry is exploring and seeking feedback on a number of important questions, including:

- What are the characteristics of an “Indigenous Utility” with respect to:
  - The ownership and operation of the utility;
  - What services are provided;
  - Who the services are provided to; and/or,
  - The location or area served by the utility?
- Should Indigenous utilities be regulated or not? And if so, how?
  - If they should be regulated, should they be regulated by the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA) or another mechanism?
  - If unregulated, how will the interests of indigenous utility ratepayers be protected?

For more information on this application, please see the proceeding page for the inquiry [here](#).

### **Background**

On March 11, 2019, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, pursuant to section 5(1) of the *Utilities Commission Act* (UCA), requested the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) provide recommendations to Government regarding the regulation of Indigenous utilities in British Columbia. The terms of the Inquiry have been outlined in [Order in Council \(OIC\) No. 108](#). The BCUC established the Inquiry on March 19, 2019 by Order [G-62-19](#).

Indigenous governments and community members, government, utility owners and operators, and the public can participate in the Inquiry in numerous ways, outlined below:

- **Request intervener status by Monday, July 15, 2019:** Persons who are directly or sufficiently affected by the BCUC’s decision or have relevant information or expertise, and who wish to actively participate in the proceeding, can request intervener status by submitting a completed Request to Intervene Form [online](#).
- **Submit a letter of comment:** Members of the public can submit a letter of comment [online](#). Letters of comment enable any member of the public to contribute views, opinions, and impact or potential impact, with respect to a matter before the BCUC, to the public record.

- **Register as an interested party:** Interested parties can register [online](#) to receive updates on the proceeding.
- **Attend an engagement session:** There will be an opportunity for attendees to speak or present their thoughts to the Panel on the items within the scope of the Inquiry. Making a submission at a Community Input Session is equivalent to providing a written submission. The following Community Input Sessions have been confirmed:

LOCATION	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Cranbrook	<b>June 3, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>St. Eugene Golf Resort and Casino</b> 7777 Mission Rd. Cranbrook, BC <b>Room:</b> St. Eugene Pavilion
Kelowna	<b>June 5, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>Manteo Resort Waterfront Hotel</b> 3762 Lakeshore Rd. Kelowna, BC <b>Room:</b> Waterfront Room I/II
Kamloops	<b>June 6, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>TRU – Brown Family House of Learning</b> 805 TRU Way Kamloops, BC <b>Room:</b> BC Centre
Williams Lake	<b>June 7, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>Pioneer Complex</b> 351 Hodgson Rd. Williams Lake, BC <b>Room:</b> 119
Prince Rupert	<b>June 10, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>Highliner Plaza</b> 815 1st Ave. W Prince Rupert, BC <b>Room:</b> Lax Kw'alaams Room
Vancouver	<b>June 12, 2019</b>	2pm – 9pm	<b>Allwest Reporting</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> Floor - 1125 Howe St. Vancouver, BC <b>Room:</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> Floor Hearing Room
Fort St John	<b>June 25, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>Pomeroy Hotel &amp; Conference Centre</b> 11308 Alaska Rd. Fort St John, BC <b>Room:</b> Scotty Room
Prince George	<b>June 27, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>Prince George Civic Center</b> 808 Canada Games Way Prince George, BC <b>Room:</b> Auditorium
Campbell River	<b>July 3, 2019</b>	10am – 3pm	<b>Coast Discovery Inn</b> 975 Shoppers Row Campbell River, BC <b>Room:</b> The Quadra/Cortes Room
Victoria	<b>July 4, 2019</b>	2pm – 9pm	<b>Comfort Inn and Suites</b> 3020 Blanshard St. Victoria, BC <b>Room:</b> Blanchard Ballroom

Currently, under the UCA most utilities with a connection to an Indigenous community are regulated by the BCUC as public utilities. Some utilities have requested exemptions from existing regulatory requirements. Findings from the BCUC's Inquiry will be shared with the BC Government, an interim report is due to the Government by December 31, 2019 and a final report is due by January 31, 2020.

**About the BCUC**

The BCUC is a regulatory agency responsible for oversight of energy utilities and compulsory auto insurance in British Columbia. It is the BCUC's role to balance the interests of customers with the interests of the businesses it regulates. The BCUC carries out fair and transparent reviews of matters within its jurisdiction and considers public input where public interest is impacted.

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