



August 12, 2019

**Attention: Mr. Patrick Wruck, Commission Secretary and Manager, Regulatory Support**

British Columbia Utilities Commission  
Suite 410, 900 Howe Street  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

Dear Mr. Wruck:

**Re: Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry  
Intervener Information Requests on Written Evidence**

Attached please find the information requests from the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association to the BC Hydro.

Should you have any questions with regard to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Zach Harmer, MPP  
Policy Director



## Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry

### Information Request to: BC Hydro

**Topic:** Promoting sustainable partnerships with Indigenous communities

**Evidence:** Mercury Energy is a New Zealand partially state-owned (51%) electricity generation and electricity retailing company.<sup>1</sup> Mercury operates 5 geothermal electricity stations, of which, 3 involve a partnership with a Māori trust (Indigenous group).<sup>2</sup> Though Mercury operates the geothermal electricity stations, the Trust's involved have benefitted significantly through the revenue generated and as a result, they are able to provide a variety of social and economic support programs to their members.

A 2017 University of Victoria survey report that involved the feedback from 102 BC First Nations and the Tribal Councils found that First Nations are eager for more involvement in the renewable energy sector.<sup>3</sup> 98% of the First Nations surveyed indicated that they are already involved or wish to be involved in the renewable energy sector.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, 75% of survey respondents indicated that they had projects in mind that they have not pursued or been able to pursue, with the main barriers being:

1. Lack of opportunity provided by BC Hydro programs;
2. lack of community readiness; and
3. difficulty securing financing.<sup>5</sup>

**Quote:** Excerpt from Exhibit C13-2 Submission on Behalf of Nuu-Chah Nulth Tribal Council, Cowichan Tribes, Gitanyow First Nation, Homalco First Nation and B.C. First Nations Clean Energy Working Group, pg. 2.

*“The Clean Energy Act (B.C.)<sup>6</sup> states: “2. The following comprise British Columbia’s energy objectives: ... (l) to foster the development of first nation and rural communities through the use and development of clean or renewable resources; ... ””*

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<sup>1</sup> Mercury Energy, “Investor Centre,” accessed August 9, 2019, <https://www.mercury.co.nz/investors>.

<sup>2</sup> Mercury Energy, “Geothermal,” accessed August 9, 2019, <https://www.mercury.co.nz/about/sustainability/renewable-energy/geothermal-generation>.

<sup>3</sup> Cook, Dana *et al.*, First Nations and Renewable Energy Development in British Columbia, *University of Victoria, School of Environmental Studies*, April 2017, pg. 3, [https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/7919/Shaw\\_Karena\\_First\\_Nations\\_Renewable\\_Energy\\_BC-2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/7919/Shaw_Karena_First_Nations_Renewable_Energy_BC-2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 15-16.

**Request:**

- (a) Does BC Hydro envision offering a partnership program for Indigenous Nations to develop electricity projects that involve a form of revenue sharing?
- (b) Has BC Hydro offered renewable energy capacity building sessions to First Nations in BC interested in developing their own projects? If not, would BC Hydro consider offering these types of sessions?
- (c) In BC Hydro's opinion, could requests (a) and (b) contribute to meeting the energy objective highlighted as well as help BC Hydro enhance grid reliability in targeted areas of the transmission system with existing issues?