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September 24, 2019

Mr. Patrick Wruck
Commission Secretary and Manager, Regulatory Support
British Columbia Utilities Commission
Suite 410, 900 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC, V6Z 2N3

Re: FortisBC Clean Growth Innovation Fund

Dear Mr. Wruck,

The need for clean, cost-effective, and reliable energy services for all sectors of the economy is clear. The CleanBC plan is a welcome step in efforts to meet BC's carbon emission targets, but fully realizing benefits requires suitable engagement by the public and industry. With this in mind, FortisBC's proposed innovation fund is encouraging and is supported by the Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic.)

The Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic) has been actively addressing energy system sustainability since its founding, when technologies and processes supporting a hydrogen economy was its core research theme. In the following three decades, IESVic has increased its membership and research activities, extending our work to issues of electrification, integrated assessments of water-energy-land, marine renewables, hybrid vehicles, and human dimensions. After considerable study, the value of clean gas infrastructure, and hydrogen in particular, persists as an important pathway for broad decarbonization of energy systems.

Hydrogen as an energy carrier fits well within the context of British Columbia's energy system. The availability of dispatchable, low-carbon electricity is already a reality, as is an extensive gas transmission and distribution network. For this reason, IESVic is pleased to support FortisBC's proposal for a ratepayer-funded Innovation Fund, and hopes the BCUC approves the application.

Many other jurisdictions are eager to create similar conditions to leverage the value that comes with both types of energy carriers. Transitioning to renewable gas at sufficient scale has the potential to address many of the hard-to-electrify parts of the economy. The costs to do this are not insignificant, but when considering the potential deferral or avoidance of stranded infrastructure, a renewable gas strategy is to be encouraged. Steady investing in innovative ways to repurpose fossil fuel infrastructure is needed and, through the Innovation Fund, FortisBC can leverage existing activities while targeting alternative energy currencies.

Sincerely,



Andrew Rowe
Ph.D., P.Eng.
Professor and Director
Dept. of Mechanical Engineering

cc:

Doug Slater, Director, Regulatory Affairs FortisBC

Diane Roy, Vice President, Regulatory Affairs FortisBC

Douglas L. Stout, Vice President Market Development and External Relations, FortisBC