



December 23, 2020

## **INFORMATION RELEASE – Update Regarding the BCUC’s Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry**

VANCOUVER – On April 30, 2020, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) issued a [Final Report](#) on its [Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry](#) (Inquiry) and provided a copy to the Minister responsible for BC’s *Hydro and Power Authority Act*. The Inquiry panel took into consideration all of the feedback received throughout the Inquiry process, as well as BC’s adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP)/*Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA). The Final Report contained 35 recommendations to the BC government as well as several recommendations to the BCUC.

Recommendations to the BCUC included:

- Develop a strategy to build First Nations’ capacity in utility regulation;
- Modify its regulatory processes to better reflect reconciliation; and
- Include Indigenous peoples in staff and commissioner roles.

The recommendations to the BCUC apply to how the BCUC conducts proceedings, and to the building of First Nation and BCUC internal regulatory capacity. These recommendations would not lead to changes in the way Indigenous Utilities are regulated in BC. Many of the other recommendations regarding how Indigenous Utilities are regulated, would require legislative changes by the BC government before they could take effect. These additional recommendations are currently being reviewed by the BC government.

Following the release of its final Inquiry Report, the BCUC formed an internal strategy committee to implement the recommendations to the BCUC. This committee aims to improve the BCUC’s organizational processes in order to broaden Indigenous participation in the public utility regulation in BC.

As a first step, the committee initiated an Indigenous Participation Survey, which was sent to everyone who participated in the Inquiry, to seek input from Indigenous communities and Indigenous community members on how to make BCUC processes more inclusive and accessible to Indigenous peoples and groups in BC. The survey concluded on October 31, 2020, and the BCUC will be using the feedback it received to inform our action plan. A summary of the survey results is available [here](#). In addition, the BCUC has engaged an external consultant to assist in analysing our organization’s readiness to implement the Inquiry’s recommendations to the BCUC and working with us to put an action plan together.

We look forward to providing more updates on this important work in 2021.

### **Background**

On March 11, 2019, the BC government directed the BCUC to provide recommendations regarding the regulation of Indigenous utilities in BC by [Order in Council No. 108](#). The BCUC’s Inquiry followed an open and transparent engagement process that began in March 2019; it included 11 Community Input Sessions and 8 Draft Report Workshops hosted by the BCUC throughout BC, as well as participation from 21 registered interveners, 18 interested parties, 12 letters of comment, and feedback from representatives of more than 50 different First Nations groups.

On, April 30, 2020, the BCUC issued its [Final Report](#) for the Inquiry into the Regulation of Indigenous Energy Utilities to the Minister responsible for the *Hydro and Power Authority Act*.

For more information about the Inquiry and all of the BCUC's recommendations, please see the proceeding page on the BCUC website [here](#).

### **About the BCUC**

The BCUC is an independent regulatory body, responsible for regulating British Columbia's energy utilities, as well as its compulsory automobile insurance rates, and intra-and provincial pipelines rates. The BCUC is also responsible for administering BC's *Fuel Price Transparency Act*. 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.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Krissy Van Loon

Manager, Communications

Phone: 604.660.4727

Email: [Krissy.VanLoon@bcuc.com](mailto:Krissy.VanLoon@bcuc.com)