

 CLEAN ENERGY CANADA

February 28, 2023

Hon. Josie Osborne

Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation

501 Belleville St, Victoria, BC V8V 2L8

Dear Minister Osborne,

We are a group of non-governmental organizations committed to supporting your government in achieving the CleanBC climate targets. Every province in Canada has a part to play in meeting our emissions reduction commitments, and as such we share your goal of decarbonizing the provincial economy, protecting nature and communities, and preparing British Columbians for the transition to net-zero.

Aligning climate and energy policy with reconciliation commitments

In particular, we urge your government to pursue these targets in a way that supports opportunities for Indigenous communities to take a leading role in B.C.'s energy transition.

As organizations that work closely with Indigenous partners in the energy space, we can affirm that there exists a clear appetite from Indigenous communities and businesses to pursue economic reconciliation and self-determination through clean energy opportunities on their traditional territories.

Therefore, just as the CleanBC Roadmap has set a direction for the achievement of B.C.'s 2030 emissions reduction targets, we need greater clarity on how the province will get to net-zero by 2050 whilst also fulfilling the Government of B.C.'s commitment to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIPA). This includes a commitment to demonstrate greater transparency on the part of the Government of B.C. in how it engages with Indigenous peoples, and works to respect the human rights of all whilst designing policies and regulations.

Clarifying the role and mandate of the B.C. Utilities Commission

We also support the direction in your ministerial mandate letter to “develop and implement a climate-aligned energy framework for B.C.” To realize this, clear and urgent policy signals to utilities and to the B.C. Utilities Commission (BCUC) are required. For example, in June 2021, some of our organizations [wrote to your ministry](#), outlining suggestions for modernizing the BCUC's enabling legislation and bringing it into line with B.C.'s climate, energy and equity objectives.

We envision a role for the BCUC as a key player in a coordinated strategy to transition the province to a clean energy economy, keep energy affordable, and improve the health and comfort of British Columbians in their homes. We are happy to see this direction reflected in your mandate letter, which includes developing targeted clean energy and efficiency programs for low-income and rental housing. Expanding the role of the BCUC beyond that of a simple economic regulator, and incorporating meeting climate targets within its mandate, is one avenue worth exploring and can be considered part of the overall package of creating a climate-aligned energy framework for the province. Overall, clarity and direction from the Government of B.C. on the respective roles of government, utilities, and the BCUC — as well as the processes these entities will follow to achieve the above — will be critically important.

Future engagement

As you work with your staff, the BCUC, First Nations and utilities to make progress on these priorities over the coming months, we would welcome opportunities to engage and constructively participate in the process. While we stand behind the above-noted suggestions, we are open to exploring a range of approaches to coordinating energy regulation, legislation, and programming in order to achieve an equitable, affordable, and rapid transition to a net-zero economy. Collectively, our organizations have decades of experience in the energy planning and regulatory process; expertise we wish to share with you and your officials.

We look forward to your response and to an opportunity to support your delivery of this mandate.

Respectfully,

Chuck Rumsey, President, Ecotrust Canada

Chris Severson-Baker, Executive Director, Pembina Institute

Mark Zacharias, Executive Director, Clean Energy Canada

Lori Mayhew, President, MoveUP