

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 3 October 2023 11:50 AM
To: Community Engagement Review
Subject: AEIC Submission

Sincere apologies for missing submission deadline, my daughter has been sick and I wasn't able to get to this in time. Hoping our submission might still be considered.

[REDACTED] are a local community group powered by volunteers, supporting community with positive climate and sustainability action. Visit [REDACTED]

Kind regards, [REDACTED]

Submission on AEIC Community Engagement Review: Enhancing Community Support for Energy Transition

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our recommendations on community engagement practices for the energy transition. Our local community group strongly believes that communities should actively participate in meeting their energy needs. As such, we emphasize the importance of involving communities in energy planning, implementation, and benefit sharing. By establishing partnerships and ensuring the fair and rapid transition to a safe climate, communities can become both partners and beneficiaries.

To effectively plan for the impacts and opportunities of renewable energy and transmission development in regional communities, it is imperative to provide adequate federal funding and coordination. We emphasize the need for better management strategies that address the effects and benefits of multiple projects within a single region. This will ensure a comprehensive approach that minimizes the exertion from multiple consultations and prepares communities for the energy transition.

While it is essential for renewable energy projects to engage with communities, the current system fails to encourage good engagement practices or rectify bad engagement. Instead, the industry's social license in the energy transition is potentially compromised. To address this, we recommend the implementation of a national policy that establishes and monitors engagement standards for all projects. By incentivizing good engagement and holding project proponents accountable for poor engagement, this policy will ensure high-quality community involvement for both renewable energy and transmission projects.

Communities require funding to establish local hubs that can educate and engage them in the energy transition. These hubs will play a vital role in helping communities benefit from energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable projects. Additionally, they will foster social acceptance by involving communities in deliberative action and empowering them to be active participants in the transition.

First Nations people hold a crucial role and stake in the energy system transition, which poses a significant challenge globally. It is imperative that they be respected, involved as partners, and leaders in policy frameworks and practices that promote First Nations justice in the shift towards clean energy. Moreover, they should have energy security, rights, and power, while also sharing the benefits and opportunities arising from renewable energy and transmission projects.

Currently, there is a lack of an overarching national narrative that enables households and communities to recognize themselves as integral to the energy transformation. To foster a sense of agency and opportunity, the Federal Government must initiate a national-level public relations campaign to effectively communicate the energy transition story. This campaign will empower individuals and communities to understand the critical need for transmission in achieving energy security and climate action.

Communities across the country face challenges in understanding the rollout of renewables and transmission. Although attempts have been made to provide information there remains a lack of a trusted and reliable source of clear information about the transition. To address this informational gap, it is crucial to establish a dedicated platform that provides communities with accurate and accessible information regarding the transition to renewables.

As the energy transition progresses, it is vital to take into account the lived experiences of local communities and their sense of place, in addition to their social, cultural, economic, and environmental values. To achieve this, we recommend the implementation of large-scale strategic land use and marine spatial mapping, conducted in collaboration with communities. This approach, as seen in the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework, will enable project developers and planning agencies to better understand local concerns and ensure that renewable energy projects are sited appropriately, minimizing disruptions to communities as well as the environment.

We hope that these recommendations contribute to the enhancement of community support and the successful delivery of electricity transmission and renewable energy developments. Thank you for considering our input during this review process.