
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Indigenous clean-energy projects funded in Northern B.C.

FORT ST. JOHN – Six Indigenous communities in the North will join the clean-energy sector with local projects following support from the Province.

The Province is partnering with Indigenous communities throughout B.C. to work toward a low-carbon future by providing funding from the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund (FNCEBF).

The fund helps develop clean-energy projects driven and owned by Indigenous communities in areas such as solar, ocean thermal, wind energy, biomass, run-of-river hydroelectric power, energy-efficiency planning and other clean energy-related areas. A key goal of the fund is to increase the participation of Indigenous communities in B.C.'s clean-energy sector.

The FNCEBF provides Indigenous communities with clean-energy support in the areas of studies and planning, equity funding and revenue sharing.

Clean-energy projects from the Saulteau First Nation and the Doig River First Nation each received \$150,000 in equity funding toward solar expansion in their communities. The Nations will install 25-35 small-scale residential solar photovoltaic systems on their reserve lands, prioritizing vulnerable and low-income community members, to advance energy self-sufficiency and reduce energy bills. Additional funding sources supporting this project include nation equity and rebates provided under the Greener Homes Grant Program. These projects will also include EnerGuide evaluations on community homes.

Four other Indigenous communities located in the North received funding in 2021:

- Binche Keyoh Bu Society — \$30,000 in capacity funding to develop a Binche Whut'en community energy plan, which will improve existing infrastructure, identify future development opportunities and guide the pursuit of renewable energy generation;
- Clarke Lake Geothermal LP — \$100,000 in equity funding for the Fort Nelson First Nation's Tu Deh-Kah Geothermal project, which will repurpose the Clarke Lake gas field into one of Canada's first commercially viable geothermal electricity and heat production facilities. This second round of funding covers a portion of the total cost of the sub-surface resource and surface facilities engineer design work;
- Daylu Dena Council — \$30,000 in capacity funding to develop a community energy plan, which will decrease energy costs and investigate options for renewable energy; and
- Wet'suwet'en Nation — \$149,950 in equity funding for community solar installation and related training.

The FNCEBF is also resetting its capacity funding limit to \$50,000 for all Indigenous communities to access for clean-energy projects.

In 2021, the fund provided more than \$3.8 million to support new capacity and equity projects in 27 Indigenous communities throughout the province. The FNCEBF is accepting applications for the next intake until Jan. 31, 2022.

The FNCEBF aligns with the Province's CleanBC Roadmap to 2030, which aims to create a balanced, sustainable future for climate action and the economy.

Quick Facts:

- Since the FNCEBF began, more than 134 Indigenous communities have benefited from \$18 million in capacity and equity funding.
- In 2021, the FNCEBF distributed more than \$8 million to Indigenous communities.
- The FNCEBF provides equity funding to Indigenous communities:
 - as much as \$500,000 for clean-energy projects;
 - as much as \$150,000 in equity funding toward community energy projects such as energy-efficiency, demand-side management and small fuel-switching projects; and
 - as much as \$50,000 in capacity funding for projects like community energy planning, feasibility studies or engagement with private-sector clean-energy project proponents.
- Currently, 46 First Nations benefit from 71 clean-energy revenue-sharing agreements with B.C. that are based on new net, incremental revenue to government, derived from water rentals and land rents. Eventually, First Nations will also benefit from wind-participation rents.

Learn More:

First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund: <http://ow.ly/JPz530apMVd>

Clean Energy BC: www.cleanenergybc.org/

Quotes:

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

“We’re working to support First Nations in developing clean-energy alternatives, especially in remote communities. The First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund continues to be a great resource to strengthen Indigenous participation in the clean-energy sector and support energy-efficient, resilient communities in their transition to a low-carbon future.”

Bruce Ralston, Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation –

“Partnerships between industry and First Nations play an important part in building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs, while also improving quality of life in remote areas of B.C. Supporting First Nation communities in becoming more energy efficient provides a direct and sustainable path to achieving CleanBC’s climate targets.”

Nathan Cullen, MLA for Stikine –

“First Nations across Northern BC are leading the way in the building of solar energy, upgrading infrastructure and real-world research for opportunities to reduce carbon emissions. I am

thrilled that we are able to support their communities' efforts to shift to cleaner sources of energy and build a cleaner, greener northwest economy."

Chief Justin Napoleon, Saulteau First Nation –

"This will allow our members to reduce their energy costs over the long term, and that is our objective."

Davide Loro, manager of integrated services, Doig River First Nation –

"We at Doig River First Nation are grateful for the announcement of funding for our community's solar expansion project. This will allow us to take the next steps toward an ultimate goal of power independence. Thanks again to the FNCEBF. Everyone have a great 2022!"

Chief Sharleen Gale, chair of Deh Tai LP, Fort Nelson First Nation –

"Fort Nelson First Nation is paving the way in Canada's emerging geothermal industry—Tu Deh-Kah Geothermal is leading the energy transition and bringing new life to the depleted Clarke Lake gas field. Our people's future depends on our ability to transform into a renewable-energy economy that can also support food security in our territory. We are proud of the sustainable future we are building for generations to come."

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