

Delegation Request - Kootenay Clean Energy Transition

The topic on which the delegation wishes to speak:

Kootenay Clean Energy Transition - A collaborative Regional initiative to support broad market transformation to address energy and emissions associated with existing homes.

An executive summary or outline of the presentation to be made:

The Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay and Kootenay Boundary have a successful history of collaboration. Specifically in the realm of climate and energy, Accelerate Kootenays was an example of a project where, with a small amount of seed funding from the Regional partners and strong political support, a \$2M project was implemented, transforming the region from one of poor electric vehicle connectivity to one that is leading the Province in the rate of growth in electric vehicle adoption.

The RDEK has demonstrated leadership on a variety of climate and energy initiatives recently. In addition to Accelerate Kootenays, the region has been recognized as a leader in BC Energy Step Code adoption, boasting the highest level of knowledge in step code among the building industry in comparison to other jurisdictions, and the highest growth of knowledge among staff over the past two years. The 'ground-up' approach to the training, capacity building and workforce transformation around energy performance in the new construction sector has contributed to this success. Focusing on the needs of industry, and responding to those needs with support that is tactical and locally relevant has led to a very high level of energy literacy among the industry.

Acknowledging the commitment of Kootenay Regional Districts to the Climate Action Charter, and the goals of the CleanBC plan to dramatically reduce emissions from existing buildings, there is a need for a coordinated and strategic approach to supporting existing home efficiency and decarbonisation through low carbon mechanical systems and deep retrofits. Further, the Kootenays are in a unique position to benefit from an early leadership role in energy transition. In addition to production a significant amount of BC's clean hydroelectricity, our region also plays a strong role in the clean energy transition with industry partners such as Teck. A collaborative initiative called the Kootenay Clean Energy Transition is proposed to once again demonstrate leadership in high-impact climate action.

Similar to the approach taken with the new home construction, the Kootenay Clean Energy Transition proposes to work with trades and contractors to offer training and capacity building over a two-year period, dramatically improving the knowledge and confidence of the construction and trades industries around clean energy technologies and deep retrofit opportunities. This includes – heat pump technology, residential solar, home Level 2 electric vehicle charging and envelope improvements. Preliminary engagement has already occurred among the contractors and trades in the East Kootenay to identify what the key barriers are to ramping up low carbon retrofits. Continued engagement with the contractors and trades will inform the design of training, and extensive engagement and marketing across the Kootenays will support homeowners in reducing their energy and emissions through retrofits.

The proposed approach is unique to the traditional rebate or incentive programs, whereby long-term market transformation is achieved through strategic training and capacity building. Rebates and incentives are a short-term solution, and while helpful to increase interest and adoption of certain actions and technologies, do not lead to the deeper change we are seeking. The Province of BC is working towards a Retrofit 'step code', targeting 2024 as the year to initiate mandatory retrofits on existing homes.

Similar to Accelerate Kootenays, there is a unique opportunity for the Kootenay Regional Districts to collaborate and leverage significant funding for a region-wide, high-impact initiative. The opportunity is specific to Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which has a signature project fund that will allocate up to \$500,000 match funding which requires seed funding from local governments. As with Accelerate, there will be opportunity to further leverage funding to maximize the impact of the initiative. The Kootenay Clean Energy Transition will result in positive workforce, economic and environmental outcomes, and will demonstrate once again the leadership of the RDEK and partner regional districts.

The name of the designated speaker(s): Megan Lohmann

The specific action which is being requested of the Board or Committee: To support a staff report and request for decision regarding a funding allocation over two years.

Whether or not you will require use of audio / visual equipment: Powerpoint will be provided on a stick.