



Summary Report

ENERGY CONNECTIONS 2017

Vancouver | March 4, 2017

SFU Wosk Centre for Dialogue

A REVIEW OF BC'S ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE ENERGY GATHERING

www.energyconnections2017.com

Energy Connections 2017 brought together a diverse group of community, private and public sector representatives and interested citizens to learn and share experiences on the elements needed to develop renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in our communities.

"I was inspired by seeing first hand some of the great work that has been completed in BC & where the opportunities to collaborate are."



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Agenda

8:30am

Opening Plenary

Welcome: Patricia Lane, Chair of BCSEA Board of Directors

Opening: Tzeporah Berman

9:00 - 10:30am

The Program and Policy Landscape

Session 1: Representatives from government spoke to the current energy and climate plans, funding programs, incentives and initiatives that set the stage for community action.

Moderator: James Glave, Glave Communications

Speakers:

- Judith Sayers, *Independent Consultant*
- Matt Horne, *City of Vancouver*
- Paul Kariya, *Clean Energy BC*

10:30 - 11:00am

Break

11:00 - 12:30pm

Renewable Energy Success Stories

Session 2: We are seeing innovations, actions and leadership coming from community groups, municipal and regional governments and the small business community. Speakers provided stories of success on innovative energy generation projects.

Moderator: Betsy Agar, Renewable Cities

Speakers:

- Andrew Moore, *T'sou-ke Nation Solar Project*
- Jeff Weston, *Thermenex*
- Scot Merriam and Ian Gartshore, *Energy Solutions for Vancouver Island*

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12:30 - 2:00pm **Lunch**

2:00 - 3:30pm **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Success Stories**

Session 3: *Where has it worked and how has it been done? Speakers provided stories of success on sustainable and innovative energy efficiency, and conservation projects.*

Moderator: Michael Pullinger, Energy Revolution Services

Speakers:

- Amy Hennessy, *Empower Me*
 - Areef Abraham, *Community Power*
 - Andrea Linsky, *BCIT*
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3:30 - 4:00pm **Break**

4:00 - 5:15pm **Building Your Community of Action**

Session 4: *Steps and ideas on how to build collective interest and financial support for sustainable energy projects.*

Moderator: Josha MacNab, Pembina Institute

Speakers:

- Ben West, *Great Climate Race*
 - Kai Nagata, *Dogwood Initiative*
 - Christine Carter, *Bullfrog Power*
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5:15pm **Closing**

This is what happened!

On March 4, 2017, the BC Sustainable Energy Association held its second annual conference, Energy Connections. This year, the event focused on community level, sustainable energy project development.

The day opened with remarks from Tzeporah Berman, one of Canada's greatest climate leaders, drawing from her years of experience from both the frontlines of our biggest environmental challenges and in the boardrooms of industry and government discussions. Tzeporah recalled how far we have come in Canada on climate action through advances in policy and in industry developments, and also highlighted how far we still need to go. Setting the stage for the day, she emphasized the importance of community organizing, noting that "citizens need to take control of politics and raise their voices regarding the future they want". Organizing isn't just about protesting what we don't want, it is about collectively coming together to build what we do want.

The first session, the *Policy and Program Landscape*, aimed to provide information on the government strategies, plans, policies and programs that are in place, which set the conditions within which projects must be built. Matt Horne, in his new role with the City of Vancouver, reviewed the City's 100% Renewable Strategy, which will be pushing for super efficient buildings, enhancing the transportation system to be more cyclable and walkable, as well as reducing waste and capturing methane. Providing a perspective on the First Nations communities in BC, Judith Sayers discussed the high level of interest across the communities to engage in the renewable energy sector, but also the complex challenges they face. While there are a number of First Nations communities still reliant on diesel for electricity generation, Judith





expressed optimism in the continually growing interests of not just the communities themselves in energy developments, but also the provincial and federal governments. Paul Kariya of Clean Energy BC provided perspectives from not only the industry members he represents but also played devil's advocate by highlighting perspectives from the provincial utilities and government. This provided for some lively discussion, but it also brought to light how complex the industry really is.

The day's second session brought a focus on specific sustainable energy projects with speakers representing a range of energy generation community success stories. The T'sou-ke Nation solar energy project was presented by Andrew Moore, and included a powerful video that showcased how the solar project has been part of a bigger community resiliency and sustainability effort. Ian Gartshore and Scot Merriam co-presented the work of the Energy Solutions for Vancouver Island group and the movement to creating a local solar energy co-op. A different aspect of renewable energy was brought to the event by Jeff Weston of Thermenex, who spoke of exergy and the actual energy that is available to be used. This concept has been a part of their district energy system designs, maximizing available thermal energy and energy efficiency.

Energy efficiency efforts were highlighted in session three, kicking off with the behaviour change program Empower Me, presented by Amy Hennessy. The unique aspect of the program is that it engages trusted community members as mentors, trained to work directly with households on how they reduce their energy consumption. Next, Andrea Linksy from BCIT next told the audience about the Factor Four initiative on the Burnaby campus, where the goal is to explore whether a fourfold reduction in materials and energy use can be achieved without compromising service levels. The presentations completed with Areef Abraham of Community Power and the experiences they have had working with First Nations, remote and small communities throughout BC as they support the creation of community energy stewardship.

The final session of the day brought the discussion back around to the concepts presented in the opening remarks and the importance of building communities of action that are engaged and passionate about the sustainable energy transition. Speakers also addressed how collective action can aid in overcoming the financial barriers associated with energy projects. This included the renewable energy fund created through the Great Climate Race, an event co-founded by Ben West, and the work of Canada's green energy provider, Bullfrog Power with Christine Carter. Speaker presentations concluded with powerful remarks from Kai Nagata and the experience of the Dogwood Initiative in community organizing, and how "people power" is our most valuable asset.



ENERGY CONNECTIONS 2017

Energy Connections 2017 once again provided a venue for networking, relationship building and learning. The BCSEA continues to strive to provide the resources needed to move us to action, but at the same time providing the information and inspiration needed to create a climate and energy aware population. British Columbians are more and more aware of not only the tremendous natural resources that we have available, but also the low-carbon economic development and sustainable jobs they can provide.

We would like to thank all of the participants, speakers, partners, supporters and volunteers of Energy Connections 2017 and look forward to bring everyone together again next year.



What we heard from guests:

"It was great to hear about the work actually happening on the ground."

"I'm proud to be part of BCSEA and excited to see how it is evolving!"

"I learned a lot and, for me, the conference greatly contrasted to the overall attitude and sentiment reflected by many people in the general public. It was quite refreshing and and inspiring."

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