

## Indigenous Community Energy Forum:

Toronto, October 25,26/17

Report by Deborah Whale

I attended this conference on October 26 following our October Board Meeting and so was able to attend Mike Lyle's welcome address in which he talked about the replacement of coal (6 gigawatts since 2006), the conservation efforts of IESO and the incorporation of green energy such as wind, water, biofuel and solar. He also mentioned that 97 Indigenous Communities have received money for community energy projects.

Chris Henderson , Lumos Energy and IESO Board, spoke next about the Indigenous Clean Energy Network and the importance of the role that Indigenous communities will play in the future of Canada's clean energy. It is important to find the sweet spot between efficient, reliable, cost-effective energy systems and Indigenous input and partnerships. The goal of the Network is to protect the land and water, decrease energy demand, improve energy literacy, seek economic and social opportunities, combat climate change and build useful networks to accomplish these objectives.

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People emphasizes the importance of free, prior and informed consent for projects on traditional territories.

These presentations were followed by concurrent sessions and I chose Energy Planning Implementation: Innovations in Energy Planning. There were three people on the panel....Kerry-Ann Charles representing the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation; Ed Gilbert, Walpole Island First Nation, and Paul Norris, Ontario Waterpower Association.

Georgina Island and Walpole Island First Nations outlined the energy planning and projects in those communities, both being initially “willing host” communities in recognition of the opportunities, both environmental and economic, available to interested First Nations. The big change in promoting energy opportunities came with the requirement for new projects needing a First Nation or municipal partner.

Once the formal panel concluded, there was a lively discussion period with several important questions being asked concerning the issue of “non-local” First Nations partners and subsequent clashes with local interests; there were also comments about clashes between economic interests and treaty area interests.

In the afternoon, there were presentations and discussions related to financing and funding opportunities; energy planning and climate change; and emerging opportunities such as microgrids and net metering.

In addition to representatives of a number of First Nations, there were also members of The Chiefs of Ontario, the Union of Ontario Indians, and the Metis Federation in attendance at the Symposium.

I could not attend the closing Plenary which was about Community Energy Success with presenters from Conservation on the Coast, Shibogama First Nations Council, Energy Matters and Fort Albany Power Corporation.

Peter Gregg made closing remarks.

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