A NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE  April 25-26, 2022

SYNOPSIS

Canada and the USA must achieve a net zero carbon neutral state by 2050 or risk catastrophic consequences. Achieving net zero by 2050 means that our economies ideally emit no greenhouse gases or are carbon neutral by offsetting any emissions that have not been eliminated, including actions such as planting trees or using carbon capture technologies that can capture carbon before it is released into the atmosphere.

Most of the proposed solutions for achieving net zero by 2050 rely on using Indigenous lands and resources to build clean energy infrastructure and extraction projects worth up to $6 trillion. This includes new clean power stations, expanded transmission lines, carbon capture and storage facilities, and new mines to provide the raw materials needed for electric vehicle battery production.

*Given the urgency of reaching Net Zero by 2050, what happens to our shared climate if Indigenous peoples are not included?*

On April 25-26, 2022 Indigenous leaders, clean energy experts, miners, regulators, and investors will meet to discuss what will be required of energy, mining and financial proponents to ensure respect and protection of Indigenous peoples' rights and interests while we all work to save our planet in a 2050 net zero future.

BACKGROUND

For decades, climate change has been a reality faced by Indigenous peoples who reside far from major North American population centers. But in recent years, the present danger of climate change has come to the rest of North America. Heat waves, draughts, hurricanes, retreating ice caps, and forest fires now impact every part of the continent, urban and rural.

To prevent even worse changes, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has called for action "limiting temperature rise to around 1.5 degrees Celsius and preventing the worst impacts of climate change... reaching Net Zero emissions of CO2 by mid-century..." 

But reaching Net Zero by 2050 will not be easy. It will require fundamental transformation in virtually all aspects of our economy. A coordinated effort in urgently needed to tackle this challenge, including in the four main areas highlighted in the conference, all of which deeply impact Canadian and USA Indigenous rights, peoples, lands and resources:

2  https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/
To reach Net Zero by 2050, we will require:

- $5 trillion of new clean energy projects and related infrastructure like transmission lines;  
- up to 14 times more electric vehicle (EV) battery minerals like nickel, iron ore, and other commodities ($1 trillion);  
- new sustainable finance standards, practices and tools to fund the energy transition, mining, and related infrastructure, and;  
- new continent-wide coordinated energy policies and regulations.

These new net zero-focused energy sources and transmission lines will be on, or cross, Indigenous lands. The 14 times increase in EV battery minerals will in large part come from Indigenous territories.

The transition to a sustainable, clean economy needs to be prioritized in Canada, the USA and globally both immediately and over the years and decades ahead. Existing sustainable finance standards like ESG do not consider Indigenous interests and are insufficient to fully account for the investment risk of the proposed new clean energy projects, transmission lines and vastly increased mining activities. And, Canadian and USA energy policy and regulations that are not compliant with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) will be non-starters.

Can we save the planet’s atmosphere without destroying Indigenous lands, cultures, and societies along with our shared environment? Can we all be smart, environmentally and socially, as well as prosperous without trading one problem for another?

Please join us at the Toward Net Zero by 2050 conference where Indigenous leaders, clean energy experts, miners, regulators, and investors will meet to learn what will be required to achieve a net zero state that respects Indigenous people’s rights, protects the environment, and ensures that we all prosper from the transition to a new more sustainable future.

Hosted by the First Nations Major Project Coalition (Canada) and First Peoples Worldwide (USA), this is a must-attend event.

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3 https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050
4 https://www.visualcapitalist.com/electric-vehicles-drive-up-metals-demand/