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November 19, 2019

File No. 0400-30; 5590-30

Via e-mail: EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Michelle Mungall
Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
PO Box 9060, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Mungall:

Re: Request for Greater Support for Solar Energy in Rural and Remote Communities

On behalf of the Islands Trust Council, we are requesting that the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources offer a financial incentive program for hybrid solar photovoltaic systems with batteries for community buildings in rural and remote communities.

Hybrid solar photovoltaic systems with batteries are a low-carbon renewable energy source and can be used with grid-tied and off-grid systems. We are seeking a funding program for these systems on community buildings such as fire halls, community halls, and schools because installation of these systems can ensure there is a community space with light, internet, and working groundwater wells during emergency situations such as wind and rainstorm events that cause power outages. In addition, communities would be able to reduce costs during normal operating conditions since they would be using less electricity from a grid or diesel generated system.

We understand that hybrid solar photovoltaic systems with batteries are designed to automatically disconnect from the grid when the power goes out to ensure the safety of hydro workers, thus making them a safe and reliable power source uniquely suited to address the issues rural and remote communities face during power outages.

In remote locations where there is no grid or when power is temporarily unavailable due to an emergency, a hybrid solar photovoltaic system with batteries can provide power day or night. The powerful wind storm of December 2018, resulted in many coastal communities being without power for extended periods. Galiano Island was without power for 10 days, and community members on Galiano Island benefited from the Galiano Conservancy's off-grid solar system which was able to power a community space with lights and internet, and power the groundwater well pump for residents who had run out of fresh water.

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The province's CleanBC plan indicates that there will be focused effort on supporting solar photovoltaics in remote and off-grid communities through the new Remote Community Energy Strategy. It is our interpretation that this strategy will focus on communities typically powered with diesel generators. While we commend this commitment, we are asking the provincial government to extend this strategy to other rural and remote communities -- both with off-grid and grid-tied systems -- that want to have access to solar photovoltaic systems for community buildings. If community members know there will be a community space with light, internet and water, they will be less likely to invest in personal diesel generators.

Increased use of solar energy with battery backup on community buildings is an important climate adaptation measure that can assist communities to become more resilient, and better prepared for emergencies.

Thank you for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council
pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc: Michelle Stilwell, MLA – Parksville-Qualicum
Adam Olsen, MLA – Saanich North and the Islands
Nicholas Simons, MLA – Powell River-Sunshine Coast
Scott Fraser, MLA – Mid Island-Pacific Rim
Jordan Sturdy, MLA – West Vancouver-Sea to Sky
Doug Routley, MLA – Nanaimo-North Cowichan
The Honourable George Heyman, Minister of
Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Regional District of Nanaimo
Capital Regional District
Comox Valley Regional District
Cowichan Valley Regional District
Metro Vancouver Regional District
qathet Regional District
Sunshine Coast Regional District
BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
K'ómoks First Nation
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lekwungen (Songhees) Nation
Lyackson First Nation
MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation
shíshálh First Nation
Snuneymuxw First Nation
Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
SṪÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation
Stz'uminus First Nation
SXIMEŁEŁ (Esquimalt) Nation
Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseil-Waututh Nation
T'Sou-ke Nation
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
WJOLEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation
WŚIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation
x^wməθk^wəyəm Musqueam
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
Nanwakolas Council
Te'mexw Treaty Association
WŚÁNEĆ Leadership Council
First Nations Leadership Council
UBCM Executive
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