

# Wind Energy Development Best Practices for Community Engagement and Public Consultation

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**canwea**

CANADIAN WIND  
ENERGY ASSOCIATION

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- Training Sessions



# Situational Context

- Wind energy is relatively new in the Canadian context and an important part of Canada's energy future: All eyes are on us!
  - There is a strong need for **factual** information
  - With growth and success comes responsibility
- Social acceptability is key to developing successful projects



**CanWEA's mission is to promote the responsible and sustainable growth of wind energy in Canada**



# Best Practices and Public Consultation

- Introducing the *Best Practices for Community Engagement and Public Consultation* is a crucial step in CanWEA's continued efforts to improve and strengthen industry practices as wind energy grows across Canada
- The **amount** and **quality** of local consultation and communications can have a pivotal impact on the success of a project
- **Goal:** Every CanWEA member has the knowledge and skills to help ensure their wind energy development is a welcomed addition to the community



# Developing the Guidelines

- Initial actions
  - “Focus group” session at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Sustainable Communities Conference (February 2010)
  - Feedback from municipal leaders at other events and one-on-one meetings (AMO, August 2010)
- The development of the Best Practice guidelines was directed by a steering committee of CanWEA member volunteers
- Input was gathered from a wide range of experts in communications and public consultation
- Scan of existing industry best practices – wireless telecommunications, etc.



# Using the Guide

- The guide has been created for CanWEA members who have a direct role to play in planning and developing wind energy projects in Canada

**The guide is not intended as a substitute for specific and expert advice**

**Encourage developers to meet and when possible exceed provincial regulations**

- CanWEA recognizes the right of citizens to have a meaningful role in developments that affect their community
  - Ensuring this right means providing information to make public consultation more effective



# Pillars of the Guide

- The guide outlines a wide range of general principals and practices
  - Providing step-by-step instructions to help plan and manage community engagement activities through project lifespan
- Each of the nine sections is designed to provide the knowledge and tools to plan and implement a successful community engagement program





# Pillars of the Guide

## Understanding the Community

- It is important to recognize the unique characteristic of each community and make efforts to demonstrate your knowledge and respect

## Establishing and Earning Community Support

- Establish contact with key community stakeholders in the early stages of planning to build public support for your project
- Take responsibility for your actions and demonstrate commitment to a long term and productive presence in the community - **“earn your citizenship”**



# Pillars of the Guide

*Consult – /ken'sAlt/ verb. To seek information or advice from (person, book etc.): take counsel (with); take into consideration (feelings etc.)*

-The Oxford Dictionary of Current English

## Public Consultation

- In most provinces public consultation is a regulatory requirement
- Community engagement activities should be guided by three key elements

## Opportunity

Provide realistic opportunities to attend all meetings – it is the proponents responsibility to inform the community and not the community's responsibility to learn about the project

## Information

Accurate, current and accessible to all stakeholders (consistent messaging)

## Response

Responsiveness – set timely standards for speed and amount of detail



# Pillars of the Guide

## Communicating with the Media

- Strategic media relations can help build your company's reputation as a trusted and responsible environmental steward and help you become a welcomed new part of the community

## Presentation Skills

- This section is designed to help you implement a successful presentation in order to effectively manage meeting dynamics and diffuse emotional situations



# Pillars of the Guide

## Addressing Opposition Effectively and Respectfully

- Change is often controversial and even the best planned wind energy projects will likely meet with some level of opposition
  - Understand specific concerns
  - Education is the most powerful tool for addressing opposition
  - At all times show respect and deal calmly with emotional situations

**Questions that go unanswered can quickly turn from natural human curiosity to negativity and opposition.**



# Pillars of the Guide

## Provincial Regulations

- Provincial regulations represent the minimum consultation required within CanWEA's Best Practices
- We encourage developers to meet and exceed provincial and local regulations whenever possible

## Tools and Templates

- Templates, tools and additional source materials are available within the guide for documents and communication materials



# Committed to Review

- CanWEA is committed to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure wind energy projects in Canada are a success and are broadly supported in communities
- Community engagement and public consultation are areas where it is important to strive for continuous improvement
  - The *Best Practices for Community Engagement and Public Consultation* will evolve over time as we learn about new ways to improve our activities



# Roll-out

- CanWEA members, municipalities (municipal leaders, MPPs, etc.) and stakeholder groups received the Best Practices guide via a personal letter
- The guide was released to media by way of a CanWEA issued press release
- The document is available for download on CanWEA's website at: [www.canwea.ca](http://www.canwea.ca)



# Training Sessions

- As part of our commitment to stakeholders and members CanWEA supported implementation of the Best Practices through several training sessions in 2011-2012
- Training sessions will help build skills and capacity within the wind energy sector
  - CanWEA is committed to providing its members with cutting-edge training opportunities
  - Nov. 14-15: Dealing with Emotion and Outrage





## Version 2.0

- CanWEA will convene a steering committee to lead process
- Key stakeholder consultations: mayors, farmers, energy experts, consultation experts, government, and citizens who have been through the process
- New elements for consideration: Community fairness models, Community Liaison Committees, identification of socio-political / community / and market acceptance as core
- Customized training began in Q4 2012 + 2013
- Certification as “Engagement Specialist”
- Process: Fall 2012 to publication spring 2013



# Discussion

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