

December 22, 2016

Ms. Johanne Gelin
Chair, Expert Panel
Review of Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
c/o Secretariat
160 Elgin Street, 8th Floor
Ottawa ON K1A0H3

Dear Ms. G linas,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). The CEAA 2012 introduced a number of changes which provided greater clarity and flexibility for industry, while continuing to preserve and protect the environment.

Clean Energy BC (CEBC) is an industry association that represents over 150 members, including operators and developers whose sole business is power production, suppliers, contractors, service providers, post-secondary institutions' Thompson River University and BCIT, and 12 First Nations. There are currently 106 independent power projects in operation throughout BC, with the last major procurement opportunity for our sector in 2008. Moreover, most of the hydro, wind, and solar projects since then have been procured through the Standing Offer Program (15MW or less) and not been great enough in size to trigger a CEAA review. However, projects in the future may fall under CEAA 2012, including a potential capacity opportunity for pump storage, so it is important that we make our views known.

Prior to 2012, there was a lack of certainty for industry regarding what kinds of projects were subject to a CEAA review. Moving to a list approach rather than a trigger approach has provided greater clarity and transparency to project developers and investors regarding what federal approvals will be required. Although this change resulted in some projects no longer being subject to CEAA, environmental protection is still being maintained through robust provincial environmental review processes. In BC, the renewable energy industry has some of the most stringent environmental approvals anywhere in the world. CEBC would like to recommend that this important policy is maintained in CEAA going forward.

The federal and provincial approvals processes need to be closely aligned in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary costs for both government and industry, ensure effective environmental protection, and provide confidence to the public. The substitution agreement between BC and the Government of Canada has been a key tool in supporting this objective. It should be maintained and used as a mechanism to promote an even greater focus on collaboration between the two levels of government. Where possible, the federal review process should incorporate valuable lessons learned from the environmental review process in British Columbia.

In closing, implementation of the Act has taken time, with government staff and industry working together to develop effective approaches to meet the objectives and requirements of the Act. Changes to the Act so soon after the last set of changes would risk upsetting the valuable progress and learnings that have been made to date, which could result in higher costs to government and industry, and potentially a lower standard of environmental protection. Consistency and long term stability are crucial for creating the stable investment climate that is key to the Canadian economy.



We appreciate that the Government of Canada has a challenging job in protecting the environment while allowing development to occur. We appreciate your work and collaboration, and would welcome the opportunity to have a further dialogue on these and other points at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Kariya".

Paul Kariya
Executive Director, CEBC