



The 2024 Fort Nelson Long-term Resource Plan engagement summary

Spring 2024 - What we heard

In spring 2024, we completed Phase 2 engagement on our long-term resource plan for Fort Nelson with the Fort Nelson, Prophet River and Dene Tha' First Nations, the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, the broader community and two industrial customers. This document summarises what we heard during this phase of the engagement.

In this round of engagement, we shared a draft of our Fort Nelson Long-term Resource Plan (FNLTRP). The FNLTRP looks out 20 years and lays out our planning objectives, our understanding of future electricity needs in this area, and how we could resource those needs. It considers uncertainties, particularly how we could decarbonize our energy supply and use emerging renewable energy sources to deliver affordable, clean, reliable electricity to this area. We prepared the draft Plan considering what we heard during Phase 1 engagement about participants' interests, priorities, and concerns.

Our Phase 2 engagement activities included virtual meetings with First Nations and community stakeholders, a virtual community meeting, and an online survey. Through these activities, we shared an overview of the FNLTRP, a summary of what we heard in Phase 1 engagement, and how we incorporated this input in the FNLTRP. We also asked participants for feedback on how we propose to meet Fort Nelson's energy needs. In these discussions and through the survey, we heard that participants:

- Support the draft FNLTRP. Almost 9 out of 10 survey respondents expressed support for the FNLTRP, and we heard support in meetings;
- Are interested in the possibility of carbon capture and a geothermal pilot. Some people who shared their views that a pilot should be delivered in partnership with First Nations; and
- Want to ensure sufficient, reliable capacity to support economic growth, even through the uncertainties of climate change.

Our next steps are to update the draft FNLTRP and submit the final plan for review to the BC Utilities Commission (Commission), which regulates public utility services in British Columbia. We expect to file the final FNLTRP in June 2024, and will share information about the Commission's review process on our FNLTRP webpage.

OUR ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

First Nations consultation

BC Hydro acknowledges that our infrastructure in Fort Nelson is located on First Nations traditional territories. We recognize that BC Hydro's system and operations have affected the land, and we share a responsibility in advancing reconciliation. Meaningfully involving First Nations in discussions about how BC Hydro can meet future electricity needs in our service areas is part of that process. Long-term resource plans are the earliest we can engage with First Nations on meeting our customers' future electricity needs. BC Hydro's consultation on the FNLTRP supports BC Hydro's mandate to incorporate the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into its business. It represents part of our efforts to advance reconciliation. Our UNDRIP implementation plan involves concrete actions we can take to incorporate the principles of UNDRIP across our business.

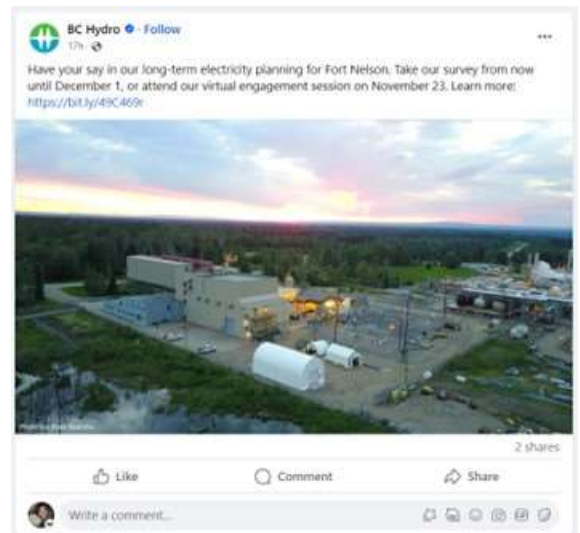
Communications

At the start of the Phase 2 engagement period, we shared our draft FNLTRP, engagement materials, and a link to the survey on our updated [Fort Nelson long-term resource planning webpage](#).

On the webpage, we also shared our contact email and invited people to sign up to be kept up-to-date with FNLTRP.

We shared a poster with information about the engagement opportunity with three First Nations (Fort Nelson, Prophet River and Dene Tha' First Nations) to distribute to their members, with an invitation to share their feedback on the draft FNLTRP.

We also advertised the engagement period and survey with a Facebook ad geotargeted to the Fort Nelson area (see right).



Meetings

We hosted seven virtual discussions with First Nations representatives, stakeholders and the public to share information about the draft FNLTRP and gather feedback. One session was held in person. These meetings were held on:

- Mar 25 – 1 representative (in-person) from the Dene Tha' First Nation
- Mar 26 – 3 representatives from the Prophet River First Nation
- Apr 2 – 2 attendees at the virtual community meeting
- Apr 3 – 2 representatives from the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
- Apr 3 – 1 representative from NorthRiver Midstream
- Apr 5 – 1 representative from Harvest Energy
- Apr 8 – 9 representatives from the Fort Nelson First Nation



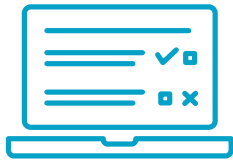
19
participants

The materials presented at these meetings are [available on our website](#).

Survey

From February 23 to April 12, 2024, we hosted an online survey, which could be accessed via our FNLTRP webpage or directly by QR code. This survey presented information about the draft FNLTRP and asked respondents to what degree they support the plan and to what degree the proposed actions align with their values and interests.

- 104 surveys were started
- Roughly 2% of the community participated in the survey.
- 94% of respondents identified as Fort Nelson customers
 - 83% of respondents identified as residential customers
 - 9% of respondents identified as small business/commercial customers, and
 - 2% of respondents identified as industrial customers
- 9% of respondents who completed the survey identified as members of a First Nation
- 7 respondents identified as being from outside the Fort Nelson region



80
surveys
completed

Any notable differences between the perspectives of respondents who identified as members of a First Nation and those who did not are described in the summary tables below.

SURVEY AND MEETING RESPONSES

Through the virtual meetings and survey, we asked participants to what degree they:

- Supported the draft FNLTRP overall, and
- Supported each of the four main elements of preparing for a low-carbon future:
 - Supporting the advancement of a geothermal pilot,
 - Investigating carbon capture technology and its application at the Fort Nelson Generating Station,
 - Continuing to monitor and assess other electricity resource options, and
 - Timing of the next long-term resource plan.

We've summarized the responses below.

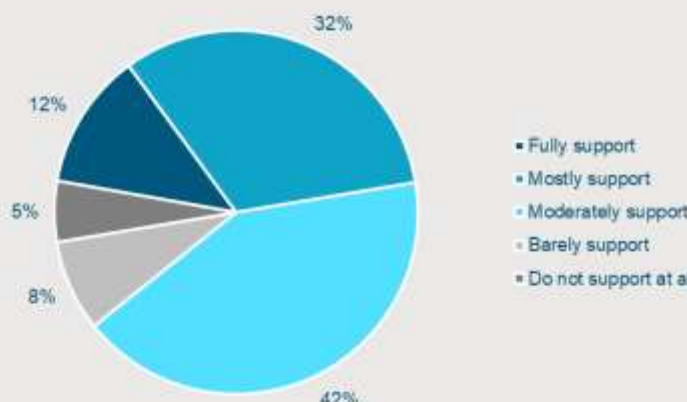
Support for our draft FNLTRP

In the meetings and the survey, we asked participants to what degree they support the FNLTRP as drafted.

First Nations perspectives (meetings and survey)

In meetings, First Nations representatives expressed support for the draft plan. Some First Nations representatives wanted an opportunity to reflect on the draft after the meeting.

Support for the draft FNLTRP was consistent between overall survey respondents and those who identified as members of a First Nation, with almost 90% of both groups indicating support.

Type of engagement	What we heard												
Meetings	<p>Themes emerging from our discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the draft FNLTRP across meetings. • A continued interest in energy security – which was discussed as being both a reliable supply and knowing that there is a resilient system if climate change impacts continue. • Interest in ensuring sufficient capacity to support future economic opportunities. • Concern that EV charging may impact local loads – although BC Hydro does not expect significant effects from EV charging, participants are seeing a growing demand for charging from people transiting through the region. 												
Survey	<p>Overall, how much do you support the Fort Nelson Long-term Resource Plan as drafted?</p>												
	 <table border="1"> <caption>Survey Results: Support for the Fort Nelson Long-term Resource Plan</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Support Level</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Fully support</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mostly support</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderately support</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Barely support</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do not support at all</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Nearly 9-in-10 survey participants indicated overall support of the draft plan (fully, mostly, moderately support).</p>	Support Level	Percentage	Fully support	42%	Mostly support	32%	Moderately support	12%	Barely support	8%	Do not support at all	5%
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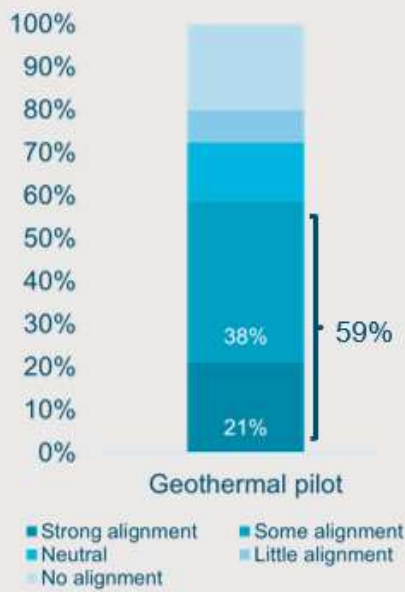
Supporting the advancement of a geothermal pilot

In the meetings and the survey, we asked participants to what degree this action aligns with their values and interests.

First Nations perspectives (meetings and survey)

In meetings, First Nations representatives supported BC Hydro’s support for a geothermal pilot. Some representatives wanted to know how to assess their territories’ geothermal potential, and others have explored the possibility of geothermal development already.

There were mixed responses among survey respondents who identified as a member of a First Nation. Comments ranged from support for a geothermal pilot to recommending focusing on other resources, such as the existing natural gas supply or connecting to BC Hydro’s integrated system with a transmission line to Fort St. John.

Type of engagement	What we heard
<p style="text-align: center;">Meetings</p>	<p>Themes emerging from our discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for a geothermal pilot delivered in partnership between First Nations and BC Hydro. • Belief that a pilot will deliver helpful learnings about potential, scale, and how to manage a geothermal project that will be useful beyond the pilot. • Understanding that geothermal sources may not be required in the near term.
<p style="text-align: center;">Survey</p>	<p>How does this action to explore the advancement of a geothermal pilot align with your values and interests?</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Geothermal pilot</p> <p>Legend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong alignment (21%) Some alignment (38%) Neutral (21%) Little alignment (10%) No alignment (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59% of survey respondents agreed that this action aligns with their values. • Among participants who identified as Fort Nelson customers, agreement dropped slightly to 47% of respondents. • Respondents who agreed with BC Hydro advancing a geothermal pilot highlighted that geothermal is a locally available, renewable resource and believe its development will promote local employment. • Respondents who disagreed shared concerns about costs and that there may not be geothermal potential in the region. <p>Here are a few samples of what we heard:</p> <p><i>“Geothermal is stable, safe, reliable and low-impact and has secondary benefits (waste heat) in a northern climate.”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s a natural resource in the area and should be utilized. Also, it would create more jobs in the region.”</i></p> <p><i>“Doesn’t seem very promising in reality. Lots of investment/money spent with very little potential for much return.”</i></p>

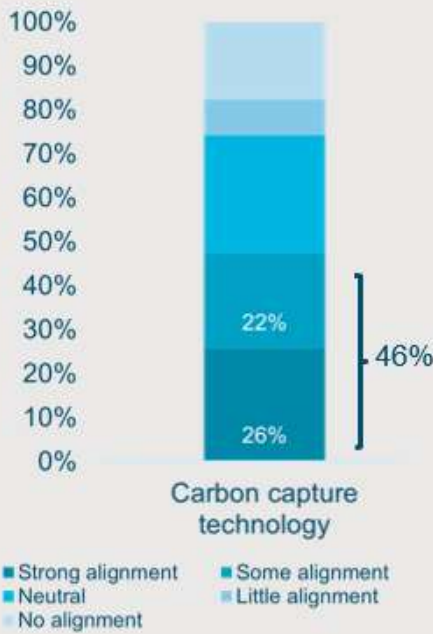
Investigating carbon-capture technology

In the meetings and the survey, we asked participants to what degree this action aligns with their values and interests.

First Nations perspectives (meetings and survey)

In meetings, First Nations representatives expressed some concerns about carbon-capture technology. Some representatives expressed doubts that carbon-capture technology will develop at the pace required to meet changing emissions legislation, and suggested it may not be worth exploring this option if it could be outdated before it can be used. Other representatives expressed concern about the long-term impacts of the technology and storing carbon.

There was more support among survey respondents who identified as members of First Nations, and a suggestion that carbon capture technology is advancing in the north in areas like Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, but not in Fort Nelson.

Type of engagement	What we heard												
<p>Meetings</p>	<p>There were fewer comments about carbon capture from meeting participants than there were about other topics.</p> <p>Themes emerging from our discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for investigating carbon capture – and some support for a more definite interest from BC Hydro. • Desire for BC Hydro to pursue regional partnerships delivering this emerging technology. 												
<p>Survey</p>	<p>How does this action to investigate carbon capture technology align with your values and interests?</p>												
 <p>Carbon capture technology</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alignment Level</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strong alignment</td> <td>26%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Some alignment</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Little alignment</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No alignment</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Legend: ■ Strong alignment ■ Some alignment ■ Neutral ■ Little alignment ■ No alignment</p>	Alignment Level	Percentage	Strong alignment	26%	Some alignment	22%	Neutral	22%	Little alignment	30%	No alignment	0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% of survey respondents agreed that this action aligns with their values. • Among participants who identified as Fort Nelson customers, agreement decreased slightly to 45% of respondents. • Among participants who identified as members of a First Nation, agreement increased slightly to 63% of respondents. • Respondents who agreed were supportive of technology that uses locally available gas and limits carbon emissions. • Respondents who disagreed shared concerns about costs and effectiveness. <p>Here are a few samples of what we heard:</p> <p><i>“This option uses an abundant resource in the area while attempting to limit the carbon emission. Makes the most sense.”</i></p> <p><i>“Seems like the most viable of the options however still not great..”</i></p> <p><i>“Extraction of fossil gas is polluting and disturbs the land. Carbon capture and storage is unproven, disturbs the land, can leak/break down, and requires energy.”</i></p>
Alignment Level	Percentage												
Strong alignment	26%												
Some alignment	22%												
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Monitoring and assessing other resource options

In the meetings and the survey, we asked participants to what degree this action aligns with their values and interests. This action to monitor and assess other resource options includes looking at advancements in the use of:

- renewable natural gas,
- carbon sequestration,
- transmission connections to our integrated system and/or to Alberta,
- biomass,
- intermittent sources such as solar,
- and continuing to explore demand-side measures..

First Nations perspectives (meetings and survey)

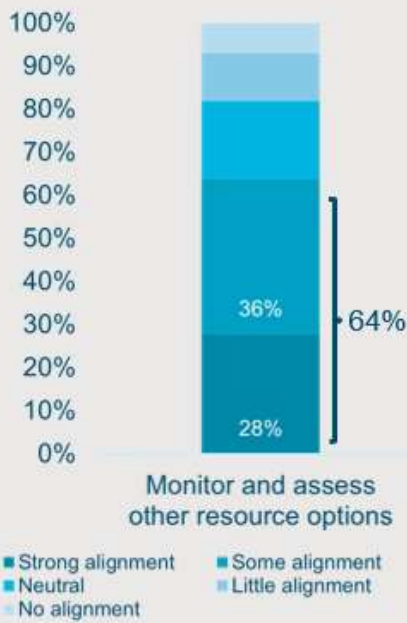
In meetings, some representatives were supportive of solar, wind, batteries, and pumped storage but also understood their very limited availability in the region.

Representatives also expressed concern about additional transmission lines and one First Nation representative said that it would not support the expansion of the transmission system through their territory due to the anticipated impacts on its way of life, as well as on plants and wildlife.

We also heard a desire to build capacity within their communities, and heard questions about how First Nations could partner with BC Hydro to develop more opportunities around studying new resources and economic participation.

Among survey respondents, there was support for exploring additional options, particularly those increasing reliability in the area. There was some support for continuing to use existing natural gas sources and questions about whether renewable natural gas would deliver environmental benefits.

Type of engagement	What we heard
<p>Meetings</p>	<p>Themes emerging from our discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited comment on emerging renewable resources. • A sustained interest in hydroelectricity and suggestion that the Liard River could be used for generation or micro-hydro. • Interest in additional transmission connections, both to the North Montney region and to BC Hydro's integrated system, and interest in how that might affect generating requirements at the Forth Nelson Generating Station. • A comment suggested that BC Hydro also consider hydrogen and how the Fort Nelson Generating Station could be retrofitted to use this source.
<p>Survey</p>	<p>How does this action to continue to monitor and assess other resource options align with your values and interests?</p>



- 64% of survey respondents agreed that this action aligns with their values.
- Among participants who identified as members of a First Nation, agreement decreased to 50%.
- Respondents who agreed emphasized the importance of exploring multiple options and continuing to seek local input.
- Respondents who disagreed suggested we should tap into existing gas resources and expressed concerns that wind and solar are intermittent sources.

Here are a few samples of what we heard:

“Solar power is a stupid idea up here in the winter...think about it for a moment...only about 6 hours of daylight at best and...”

“We should continue with what we have in place, the wind doesn’t always blow. Wind mills are ugly and loud, let alone the birds they kill and solar is not practical as in winter we have 6 hours of daylight.”

“Renewables (solar in summer with storage) has potential. Power smart (efficiency upgrades) also make sense.”

Timing of the next long-term resource plan

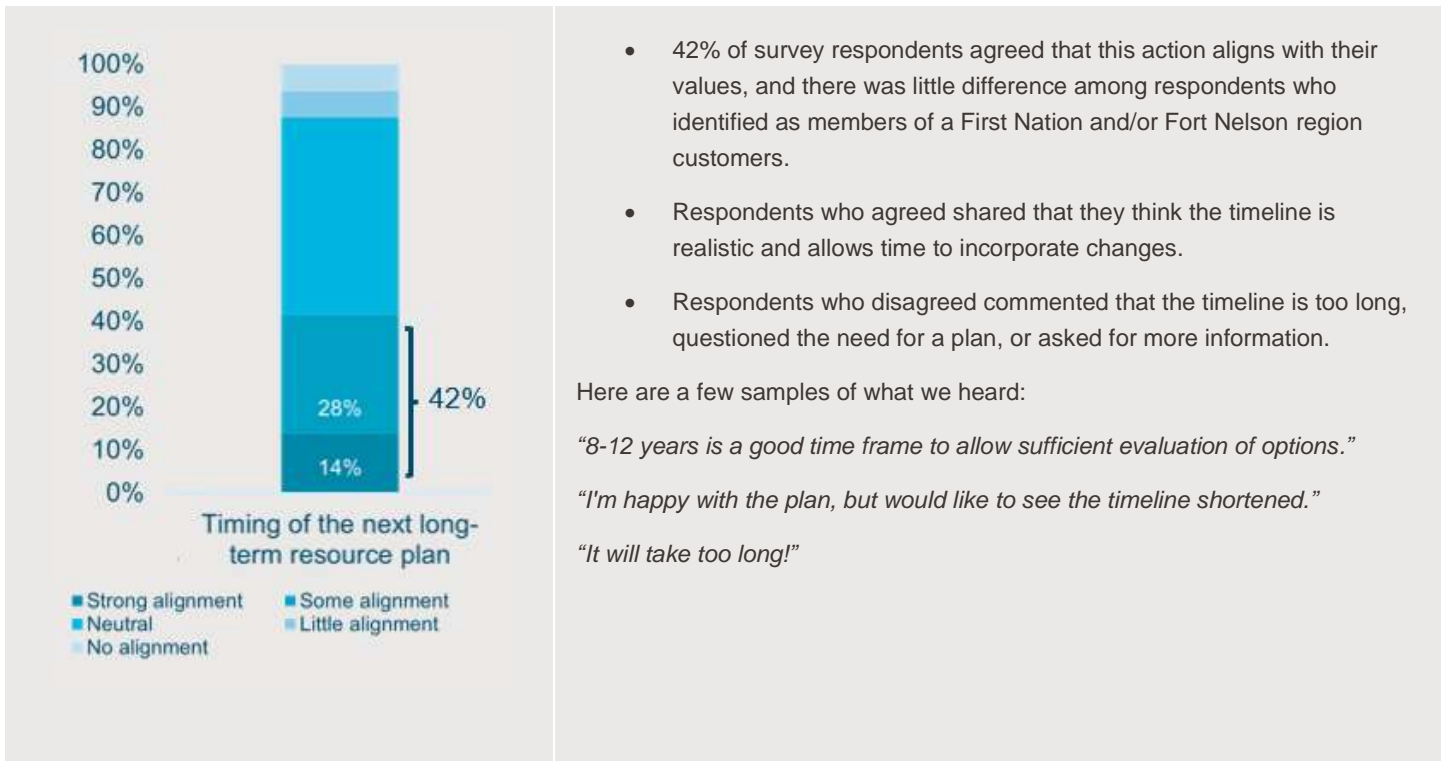
In the meetings and the survey, we asked participants to what degree this action aligns with their values and interests.

First Nations perspectives (meetings and survey)

In meetings, First Nations representatives expressed support for the timing of the next long-term resource plan and understood that anticipated/upcoming policy changes are affecting timing.

The survey revealed that respondents who identified as First Nations had more divided responses. While some respondents supported the timing, an almost equal share suggested there was ‘no alignment’ with their values, commenting that BC Hydro should use existing gas resources.

Type of engagement	What we heard
Meetings	Meeting participants did not comment on timing,
Survey	How does the timing of the next long-term resource plan align with your values and interests?



Additional comments

Similar to responses to Phase 1 engagement, participants raised reliability of supply as a key value. Several participants expressed concern about the potential for near-term outages, particularly threatened by wildfires. For longer-term, participants raised concerns about the climate emergency/climate change and expressed appreciation that BC Hydro is open to exploring emerging technologies as it works toward a low-carbon future. There were suggestions through the survey that we focus on particular energy sources: natural gas was mentioned several times, and respondents also expressed their preference for biomass and asked BC Hydro to consider hydrogen and nuclear options.

NEXT STEPS

Our next steps are to update the draft FNLTRP with what we learned from Phase 2 Engagement and to submit the final FNLTRP to the Commission for review. We expect to file the final FNLTRP in June 2024, and will share information about the Commission’s review process on our FNLTRP webpage.