



kweso'tmu'kw
community energy

A Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy

Overview and Summary Report



Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office
Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative

Our Rights. Our Future.



The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia recognize that economic development is important to advancing our communities, however, we also carry with us strongly rooted traditions of protecting the natural resources. While we recognize that maintaining the same carbon footprint of our ancestors is nearly impossible, the goal of the Mi'kmaq is to find a balance between development and sustainability.

This is a formidable challenge for the Renewable Energy Strategy's development team. In order to find that balance, the Mi'kmaq have looked to the concept of "Kweso'tmu'kw", which means "we are looking after it". This philosophy of putting back what we use has become the core principle of our work.

The Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy, "Kweso'tmu'kw" is a call to action for the Mi'kmaq to find a balance between sustainability, development and maintaining our value of nature. It is this principle of environmental stewardship and affinity to Mother Earth that drives the elements of our renewable energy strategy.

The Strategy, which was ultimately crafted through a concerted effort of like minded Mi'kmaq professionals and non-Mi'kmaq consultants, was delivered and ratified by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (Assembly) in July of 2011.

Getting There

Getting to a point where the Mi'kmaq could present a vision for sustainable development and move this vision forward was an immense undertaking.

Through consultation pursuant to the [Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation](#) Process, the Assembly and the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO) initiated the undertaking that mobilized those things that many would deem to be immovable, such as political will, economic stagnation and a general lack of financial and technical resources that a strategy of this kind requires.

To ensure that the Assembly had “all the moving parts” in place several parallel processes were ongoing.

First, the consultation process with the Province of Nova Scotia was essential to ensure that the government supported the Mi'kmaq in this endeavor. During that process the Province saw real value in having a Mi'kmaq strategy to compliment the province's aggressive objectives with the reduction of the provincial carbon footprints by 2012 and 2020.

This process, led by Chief Gerard Julian, Lead Chief of the Energy Portfolio, took place at the Mi'kmaq Energy Consultation table in late 2009 and concluded in the spring of 2010.

Second, the Assembly recognized the need for Mi'kmaq financial capital that would eventually be required to initiate the potential renewable energy projects that the Strategy may present as real economic opportunities.

In 2010, the Mi'kmaq acquired a development fund, via consultation, that will invest in Mi'kmaq renewable energy projects. This process, led by Chief Julian and the KMKNO, has resulted in the establishment of the Major Resource and Energy Development (MRED) fund.



This fund is now ready to be operational under the guidance of Chief Robert Gloade, Lead Chief of the Mi'kmaq Finance Portfolio.

Third, KMKNO needed to acquire the technical capacity within the renewable energy industry in order to analyze the results of the Strategy and what the Mi'kmaq Nation would need to do in order to achieve the potential of the Strategy.

The Mi'kmaq Energy Advisor position was then created and was intended to capture the technical, financial and social information needed to quickly turn the Strategy's narrative into action.

Finally, the Mi'kmaq had to recognize the complex nature of our continued rise in energy consumption, in comparison to the mainstream. As the Strategy would undertake an investigative approach into the issue of ever increasing Mi'kmaq use of electricity, the outcome would not only need to be understood but also the Mi'kmaq required several stop gap measures to begin to address the issue.

The Outcome: Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy

In July 2011 the Assembly was presented with the Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy by the consultant, Stantec Environmental. The Strategy had three primary elements. First, the Strategy examined the potential for a multitude of potential renewable energy developments in wind, biomass, run of river hydro, geothermal and tidal prospects in terms of the COMFIT program.

In most cases the analysis examined both the grid capacity, wind, tidal or river and stream regimes and sunlight availability pursuant to the 13 Mi'kmaq communities.

Ultimately it was the wind prospects (large and small) that captured the attention of the Assembly and individual bands. It is however worthy to note that the opportunities in large wind now being pursued were derived from existing wind developments that were not included in the Strategy. This being said, there is a series of developments under review for small wind to which the Strategy identified potential communities for development.

Currently the Assembly has 10 MW of approved COMFIT wind developments (Bridgewater and Amherst). As well, other Mi'kmaq communities are actively pursuing their wind and biomass projects.

The Strategy also (for the first time ever) captured the exact data on electricity usage by all 13 Mi'kmaq communities. The Strategy revealed that the usage data was higher than anticipated.

Upon receipt of the Strategy in 2011 the five Cape Breton bands enacted a pilot program in their communities which endeavored to find the root causes for the higher usage through home energy audits and ways to mitigate the problem.

In 2012, the Assembly is expected to launch a province wide program that will begin to address the usage issue to upwards of 2500 Mi'kmaq residences across the province.

Finally the Strategy provided the Assembly with advice and protocols to affect legislative change affecting the renewable energy sector and the Mi'kmaq.

Currently the province has enacted changes to the Electricity Act that allow the Mi'kmaq to develop projects on lands they hold within and beyond the Indian Act. As well the legislation also sets aside a percentage of turbine development for small wind for all 13 communities.

One can say with confidence that the Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy will continue to inform and affect future developments by the Mi'kmaq in this exciting sector.

We are looking after it, and will continue to do so.

