

# Guide for the Formation and Operation of a Community Liaison Committee



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## PREAMBLE

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance to proponents and community representatives when establishing a Community Liaison Committee (CLC).

The *Environment Act* defines a proponent as a person who

(I) carries out or proposes to carry out an undertaking or activity, or

(ii) is the owner or person having care, management or control of an undertaking or activity

Effective CLCs maintain good public relations, foster environmental stewardship, and act as a vehicle for transparent and ongoing communications between community, stakeholders, and the proponent on matters pertaining to current and planned development in the community. Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) may require a CLC to be formed, as a condition of an approval issued under the *Environment Act*, either prior to project construction or at future stages of the project development.

Proponents are encouraged to establish a CLC as early as possible in the planning stages of the proposed project. The earlier the formation of the CLC, the more likely that the proponent will be able to address the issues raised by the public and stakeholders pertaining to a project.

Although Nova Scotia Environment provides this guide for the formation of a CLC, NSE will not be an active sitting member of the committee.

## PURPOSE

The Purpose of a CLC is:

- to act as an advisory body to a project proponent by providing input on existing or potential concerns of the community with respect to the project plan and activities; and
- to represent community interest by providing an avenue for the mutual exchange of information between the proponent and the community with respect to any existing or potential environmental effects of the project plan and activities.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

A terms of reference for formation and operation of the committee is recommended. The terms of reference (TOR) should address the following:

### Membership:

A well structured CLC is one with a balanced membership and broad representation. The CLC should be kept to a reasonable size, in most cases no greater than ten members. TOR should specify the frequency by which memberships are renewed.

The CLC should include members representing the following groups:

- Proponent
- Property owners/residents located in close proximity to the project

It is recommended that a CLC also include representation from other interested parties such as:

- First Nations
- Local business
- Municipally elected officials or their representatives
- Community or environmental groups

In some cases NSE may require membership from specific stakeholder groups or associations as a condition of an approval under the *Environment Act*.

CLC members are not typically provided with any remuneration for participating on the CLC. The proponent may choose to reimburse expenses in some cases (travel etc.).

#### Meetings:

It is recommended that there be a minimum of two meetings per year, the dates of which should be set at the beginning of each calendar year. Notice of such meetings are recommended to be provided to all CLC members. The total number and frequency of meetings should be decided by the CLC members, in consultation with the proponent.

Any written materials to be discussed at CLC meetings should be provided to all members prior to the meeting.

The CLC may wish to invite an external advisor or third party to attend a CLC meeting for the purposes of obtaining information, or receiving advice to help the CLC meet its' mandate.

#### Mandate:

The mandate of the CLC should be described in the terms of reference. Typically, a CLC mandate will be to provide:

- an on-going mechanism for communication between the proponent and the community on the design, construction and operations of a project, and on any impacts or perceived impacts on the environment;
- a means for the facility operator to provide information to, consult with, and obtain advice from a body representative of the community; and
- a forum whereby the residents can bring any issues of public concern related to proponent's activities to the attention of the facility operators.

The CLC may also wish to include additional responsibilities within their mandate which should be detailed in the terms of reference.

CLC objectives, mandate and membership composition should be reviewed annually by its members with the proponent consenting to any change in the composition of the CLC. Records of CLC meetings and outcomes should be kept by the committee for the life of the CLC.

## **PROPONENT'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- The proponent is responsible for soliciting membership for the CLC. This may be done through notice in newspapers or in other public venues, or by direct contact with potential members. Notice of the CLC formation and members must be made known to the residents of the affected area by the proponent.
- For a successful CLC, the proponent should attend all CLC meetings.
- The proponent may decide to select a chairperson, or another process may be used to appoint a chair such as an election by CLC members. The appointment of co-chairs, or the selection of an impartial third party is also an option.
- The proponent is responsible for the provision of meeting space, copying of minutes (copies to be sent to regulatory agencies when requested) and annual reporting.
- The proponent is encouraged to provide timely, accurate information about the project, future plans, operations and activities.
- The proponent should consider CLC input in the development of mitigation, contingency, compensation and monitoring plans for the undertaking.
- The proponent should provide all relevant project related information requested by the CLC, except for information which is considered to be confidential for legal or business reasons.
- The proponent should ensure that the views of the CLC are made available to the public in an appropriate manner.

## **CLC MEMBER'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- CLC member's roles and responsibilities includes providing input, guidance, discussing community views, issues and concerns with respect to the project plan and activities.
- The CLC members should work collaboratively with the proponent by providing practical advice and feedback to help avoid or minimize impacts from the project on the community and environment. The CLC will act only in an advisory manner to the proponent.
- CLC members should be prepared to consider a range of views, and work in a respectful way while positively addressing issues and concerns.
- The specific project elements to be reviewed and commented upon by the CLC may include, but are not limited to :
  - environmental protection plans, including monitoring, survey, mitigation, contingency and compensation plans;
  - dispute resolution policies and/or complaint response procedures;

- reclamation plans;
  - operational hours/schedules;
  - noise, dust and visual impacts; and,
  - transportation.
- CLC members may be requested by NSE to review and provide comment on an application by the Proponent for an approval, or renewal of an approval related to the project.

### **DISSOLUTION OF CLC**

A CLC may be dissolved or declared inactive under the following circumstances:

- Members of the committee and the proponent agree that the requirement for a committee no longer exists;
- The project becomes inactive (put on hold); and
- Where the committee has been formed as a requirement of an Approval, and written consent from Nova Scotia Environment has been received.

