

# Comments from Engineers Canada on: National Energy Board Modernization: Draft Terms of Reference for Expert Panel

Questions concerning this report should be directed to:

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## Background information

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Engineers Canada is the national organization of the provincial and territorial associations that regulate the practice of engineering in Canada and license the country's 290,000 members of the engineering profession. Engineering is a self-regulated profession. Engineers Canada exists to support the provincial and territorial engineering regulatory bodies. Together, we work to advance the profession in the public interest.

Engineers drive much of Canada's economy. Natural resources, manufacturing, technology and other sectors rely upon the expertise of engineers. As one of the top five exporters of engineering services in the world, the expertise and skill of Canada's engineers contributes to Canada's and the global economy. Engineers work tirelessly in Canada and abroad to keep the public safe and to contribute to strong, prosperous communities.

Engineers Canada is ready and willing to help the government build a better Canada. Among Canada's more than 290,000 members of the engineering profession, there are countless experts prepared to assist the government in strengthening the middle class, tackling innovations and improving the resilience of the country's infrastructure.

## Comments

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Engineers Canada believes it is vitally important to include engineers as members of the expert panel working to modernize the National Energy Board (NEB). Many professional engineers are uniquely qualified and have the expertise to recommend the best policies, procedures and technologies to ensure the greatest value for Canadians, in terms of economic, environmental and social benefit. There are many professional engineers in the energy sector who have expertise in areas ranging from strategy to planning, to extraction, to transformation, to transportation, to decommissioning. In addition, many professional engineers have great expertise in the field of environmental assessment and environmental engineering. Every day, engineers across the country work on environmental assessments by evaluating the potential impact of their current and future projects on the environment. These professional engineers can provide unbiased and evidence-based advice within their mandate to serve the public interest.

Engineers Canada would be honoured to help facilitate the recruitment of highly qualified and skilled professional engineers who are recognized for their leadership and outstanding record of achievement in their respected fields. The inclusion of professional engineers on the expert panel will strengthen the credibility and capability of the panel through objective unbiased advice, technical expertise and our professional mandate to protect the public interest, our environment and our economy.

We therefore strongly recommend the creation of a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to the panel. Engineers Canada would be pleased to become participants of this committee in order to add engineering and science perspectives. We would once again be delighted to assist in identifying and facilitating access to engineers to provide expert advice in subject areas as the panel requires.

In addition, please find below some specific suggestions for your consideration:

- The outlined terms of reference are very focused on pipelines and are not general enough. The panel should be considering all forms of transportation required to ship energy across the country and overseas.
- The role of the NEB is to provide oversight on supporting the safety of Canadians and the environment. This requires close cooperation with “Environmental Assessments” to ensure complementary roles rather than duplication between the two Expert Panels.
- The transformation of energy within Canada needs to be clearly assessed to ensure that the benefits go beyond economic gains and that they consider the environmental and social impacts.
- The Scope of Review by the expert panel on the NEB modernization includes the potential to expand the mandate to cover renewable energy. As this has not been part of the NEB’s mandate in the past, significant time must be spent by the panelists to establish how the transition to a low carbon economy can be realized through the NEB modernization process.
- Ensuring that the decision making process is transparent, well communicated, and incorporates measurable social, environmental and economic considerations needs to be reinforced.
- A need to ensure the context of panel decisions upholds the three pillars of sustainability—namely economic, environment and social factors—and are technically feasible for the project implementation.
- The panel should explore ways to streamline the review processes to reduce the total elapsed time between application and decision. A list of criteria could be developed to establish timelines for the each review on a case-by-case basis instead of a prescribed time limit.
- The scope of the review should include how to include climate change into review processes. This would include greenhouse gas emission reduction as an explicit objective for projects reviewed by the NEB, as well as requiring explicitly defined measures to address climate change impacts (e.g., vulnerability assessment, adaptation) in project submissions.

Engineers Canada wishes to thank the federal government for the opportunity to comment on this important process to modernize the NEB and to ensure it continues to provide evidence-based information to inform decisions on major projects.