

Positive Energy: Strengthening Public Confidence in Energy Decision-Making

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Presentation Overview

Background:

- Positive Energy: mandate and approach

Why Now?

- The diagnostique: Elephants, Horses, Sitting Ducks

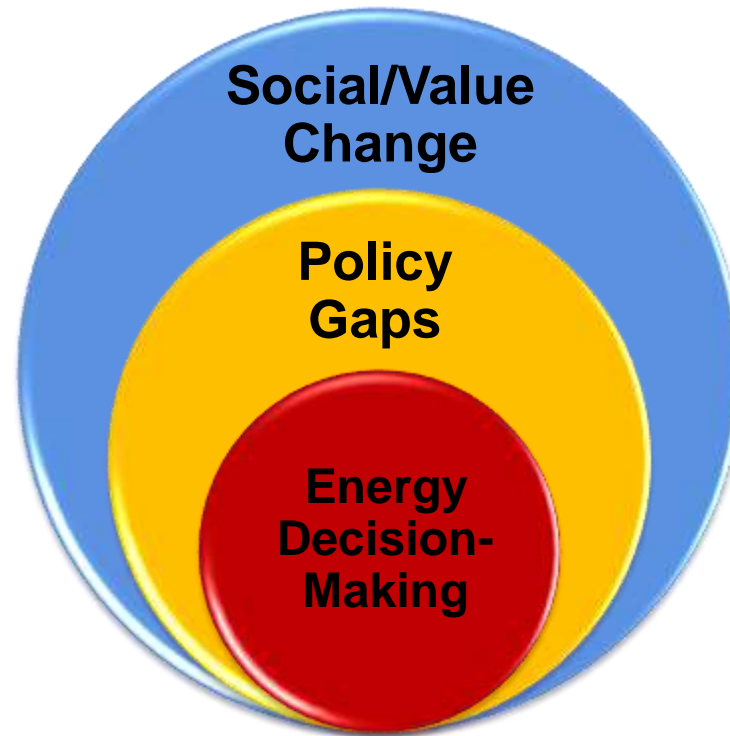
What Now?

- The prescription: what to do?

Public Confidence: Why Now?

No single reason – multiple factors

Metaphor of elephants, horses and sitting ducks



The Horses: Social & Value Change

Fundamental changes in postwar period

1. Decline of trust in government, industry and experts
2. Decline of deference to authority/expertise/experts
3. Increasing preoccupation with risk and decline in risk tolerance
4. Desire for greater public involvement in decisions
5. Shift from group to individual values
6. Rise of anti-corporate/big business/fossil fuel values

Combined impact

We aren't in (1950s) Kansas anymore

1. Skepticism re balance/legitimacy in govt decisions
2. Lack of confidence in expert opinion & scientific evidence
3. Appeals to the national interest get less traction
4. Tension - participatory & representative democracy
5. Preference for small-scale locally owned projects
6. Perceptions of risk can trump realities of risk

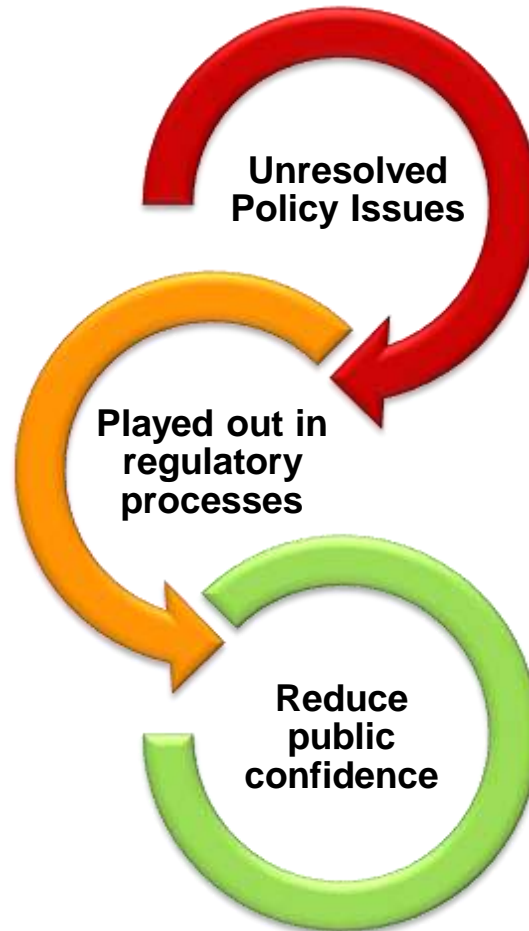
Amplified by technological change

The Elephants: Policy Gaps

Many elephants in many rooms

- Projects opposed on broader questions of policy – playing out in regulatory processes
- Three key gaps:
 1. Climate change
 2. Indigenous concerns / Reconciliation
 3. Lack of adequate mechanisms to address cumulative effects or to plan regionally
- Exacerbated by silos

Cascading Effect of Policy Gaps



The Sitting Ducks

Energy decision-making processes

- Regulatory processes critiqued along all these lines
- Regulators' responses may exacerbate the problem
- Policymakers' responses may likewise undermine confidence in regulatory processes and privilege short term over long term imperatives

What to do?

- Importance of getting the diagnosis right so we're working on the right problems
- Need for the right people to be willing to ask – and answer – the tough questions
- At Positive Energy – convening, discussion papers & research on energy decision-making system

What to do?

Accept the horses

- Can't turn back the clock on social and value change
- Governments can't act unilaterally but need to balance listening/acting

Befriend the elephants

- Address gaps: climate, reconciliation, cumulative/regional effects
- Ask & answer tough questions

What to do?

Get the ducks back on their feet

- Strengthen confidence in energy decision-making
- Positive Energy Discussion Paper: System Under Stress
 - Systems approach: it's a system & parts interconnected
 - Core: policymakers and regulatory agencies
 - New parts: Indigenous authorities, Municipal authorities
 - Sits in physical and market energy systems
- **Call for 'informed reform'**: systems approach
 - Three main stress points

1. The Policy/Regulatory Nexus

The Two Energy Solitudes

- Dividing line between policy/regulation in substantive and procedural terms:
 - ✓ societal values/trade-offs vs technical/interest-based issues
 - ✓ regulatory independence: need to scope this better - not absolute or unhelpful disconnects can emerge
- Governance of regulators by policymakers
- Planning: cumulative/regional effects
- Role/place of Indigenous and municipal governments

2. Who Decides?

Balance between local & higher authorities

- National interest & local control
- Authorities versus communities
- How do local/Indigenous authorities fit in?
 - From vetoes to bridges
 - Role of planning
 - Local/traditional knowledge
 - New models of engagement/involvement – co-creation (?)
- Capacity

3. How to Decide?

Engagement, Information, Capacity

- Distinguish between policy, plans, projects
 - Different time scales, geography, stakeholders, public authorities, interests
- Energy policy and strategy
- Regional planning and SEAs
- Cooperative development, mgmt, monitoring
- Information

Project Decision-Making

Communities project key findings

1. Not just fossil; not just climate
 - Importance of local impacts/benefits/processes
2. Context matters
3. Energy literacy not the issue
4. Real/early engagement
5. Values versus interests

RESTORING TRUST IN ENERGY DECISION-MAKING



Final Words...

Many challenges ahead, but:

- Players ready to do their part
- Strengthening public confidence will unlock economic, environmental and social potential
- Opportunity for Canada to move from bleeding edge to leading edge of public confidence

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