

YOUTH GENERATION ENERGY ROUNDTABLE

UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

August 16, 2017

On August 16, 2017, Parliamentary Secretary Kim Rudd held a roundtable at University of New Brunswick with a number of students and young Canadians interested in energy issues. The roundtable provided an opportunity to discuss long-term opportunities and challenges in Canada's energy future. Discussions gravitated towards the future of electricity grids, energy transmission, and utilities.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Electricity interties mainly go North-to-South because of existing markets. Participants discussed the opportunities of shifting to East-West connections to promote emissions reductions. Provinces that rely on fossil fuels need to be connected to provinces that have an abundance of renewable and non-emitting electricity. These east-to-west interties require government subsidies in order to be commercially viable.
- New Brunswick is “one nuclear reactor and one gull island away from having a negative carbon footprint”. Large energy projects can help New Brunswick reach zero-emissions, and with the appropriate interties, the province can help neighbouring provinces do the same.
- The transition to a lower carbon economy must be done carefully. We should not base policy entirely on what is political advantageous. Reference was made to Germany phasing out nuclear too quickly. Some of the energy used by Germany is now generated by burning coal, thus going against efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We need to look at all sources of energy to determine the right energy mix.
- We should not build our generating capacity on what is low-cost in the moment. Liquefied Natural Gas and Uranium were raised as examples. We cannot rely entirely on one or two generating methods as commodity costs can rise and fall. A diverse energy mix can help mitigate risks related to energy costs.
- Smart grids were identified as a key element of Canada's energy system of the future.
- Tidal energy was identified as key renewable resource for Atlantic Canada's energy future.
- Education needs to play a role in Canada's energy future. In order for us to achieve our climate goals, we need to teach students about greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, and other important concepts.