



STREAMLINING
WIND AND SOLAR
ENERGY PROJECT
PERMITTING

BCER

BRITISH COLUMBIA ENERGY REGULATOR

AGENDA



**Introduction &
Background**



Objectives



**Regulatory
Themes**

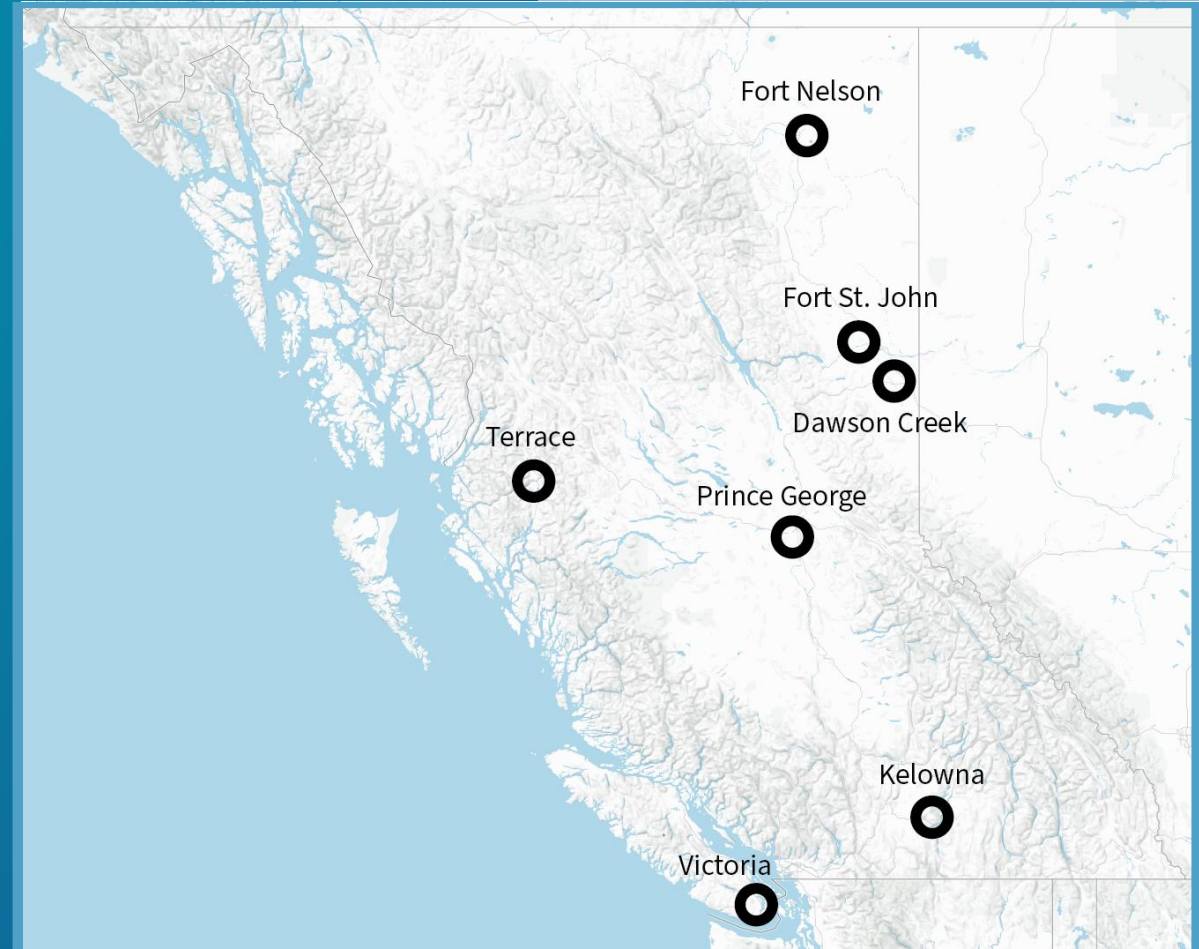


**Operations &
Implementation**

Introduction

The BC Energy Regulator (BCER) is a single-window regulatory agency with responsibilities for overseeing energy activities, including renewable energy, oil and gas, LNG, geothermal, hydrogen, ammonia and methanol projects.

The BCER Board has regulation making authorities under the Energy Resource Activities Act (ERAA), the Geothermal Resources Act, and the Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act (REPA).

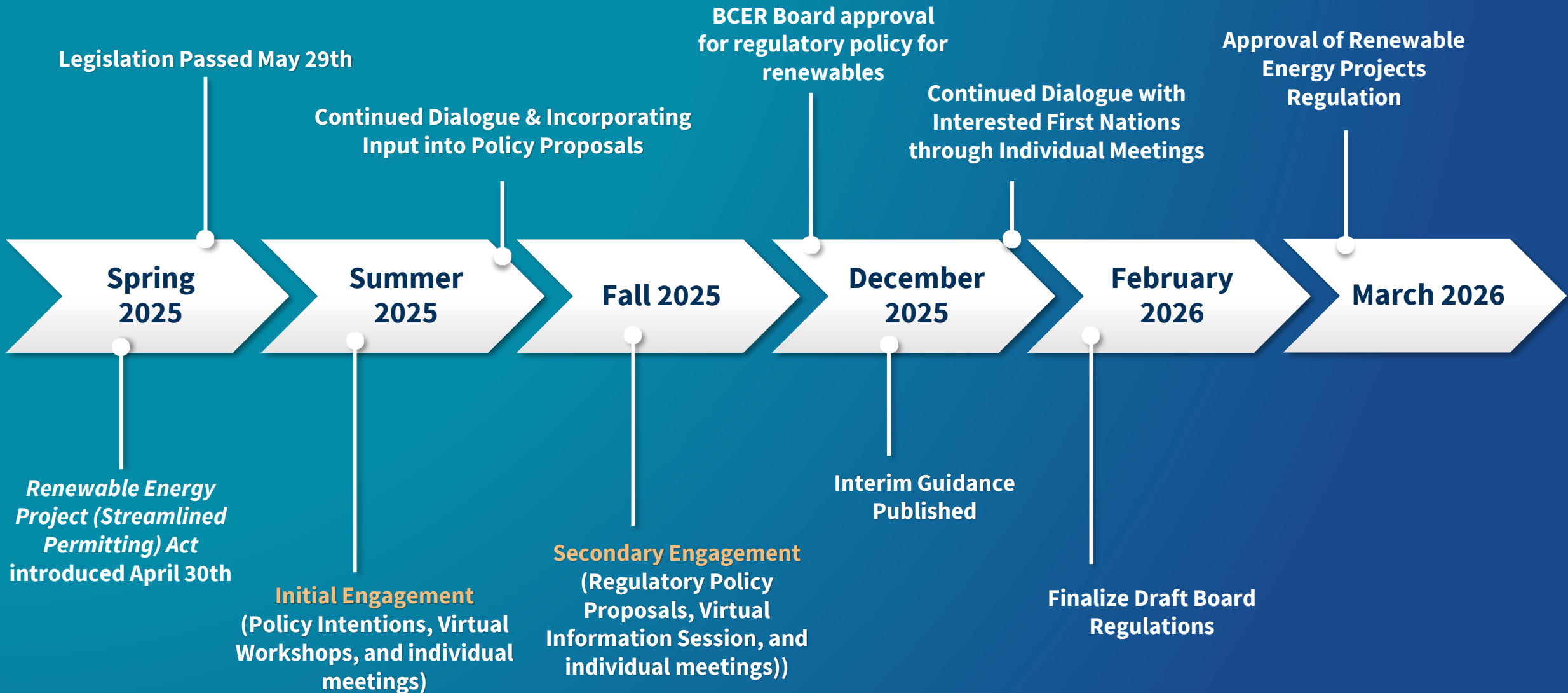


Single-Window Regulator

- BCER has authority to issue a range of natural resource approvals, allowing it to operate as a single window for most regulatory approvals.
- ERAA includes unique provisions called specified enactments, which give the BCER the powers of other enactments.
- The framework also includes delegations and designations under other Acts, including new authorities for the Wildlife Act under REPA.
- REPA also provides the BCER with authority to approve activities within the agricultural land reserve.



Legislative & Regulatory Timeline



A photograph of three deer in a green field under a blue sky. The deer are positioned in the middle ground, with one on the left, one in the center, and one on the right. The background shows a line of trees and a utility pole. The entire image has a blue tint.

Objectives of the Regulatory Framework

Policy Objectives

- Streamline permitting decisions for renewable energy projects, including promoting First Nations & local community support
- “Right-touch” regulation that addresses environmental and technical risks of renewable energy development with most appropriate tool
- Support viability of renewable energy projects aligned with BC’s Clean Power Action Plan
- Facilitate future inclusion of additional renewable resources in BCER framework



Provincial Alignment

- Streamlining permitting supports initiatives outlined in BC's Clean Power Action Plan and Look West Strategy
- New framework aligns with Provincial objectives including advancing energy security, resilience, and clean power expansion to drive economic growth and climate action
- BCER oversight provides significant efficiencies to projects selected in the 2024 and 2025 BC Hydro Call for Power processes and beyond



Regulatory Design

Regulation supports policy objectives by:

- Scaling requirements for different project types (new vs. existing, EA vs. non-EA, wind vs. solar)
- Relying on the development, implementation, and maintenance of management programs for environmental, social, and technical risks
- Employing a “box permitting” or “design envelope” approach to provide flexibility in project design at permitting stage





Key Regulatory Themes

Regulatory Themes



THEME 1 **Environmental Assessment and Protection**

- Impacts to Land, Water and Wildlife
- Cumulative Effects Management
- Decommissioning & Restoration



THEME 2 **Supporting Reconciliation**

- Early and Pre-Engagement
- Indigenous Knowledge and its Protection
- Cultural Heritage Sites



THEME 3 **Foster Social Well-being**

- Assessment of Community Impacts
- Community Engagement
- Noise
- Crown Land Access
- Shadow Flicker
- Solar Panel Glare



THEME 4 **Protecting Public Safety**

- Adoption of Codes & Standards
- Setbacks
- Ice Fall & Ice Throw
- Emergency Management
- Physical Security
- Buried Infrastructure
- Batteries & Energy Storage Systems
- Management & Maintenance Programs
- Required Notifications
- Required Reports & Records

Incorporating Industry Feedback

- Regulation informed by substantial engagement with renewable energy sector
- Shared policy objectives, released discussion paper, and incorporated feedback into final regulations
- Key industry concerns addressed include:
 - Setback distances
 - Number and timing of submissions
 - Flexibility in development plans (construction corridor/box permit approach)



Cost Recovery

- Part 4 of REPR establishes fees and enables BCER to collect financial security
- Permit application fees are applied across three project “classes” and range from \$7,500 - \$250,000
- Fees established for authorizations without an ERAA permit, investigative use licences, and permit amendments.



Cost Recovery – Next Steps

- The BCER is currently reviewing provincial IUL policy for wind projects. This review will consider changes to the Land Use Operational Policy for wind and solar energy projects.
- The BCER has committed to review its IUL fees as it gains experience reviewing these applications and has more information regarding the costs of providing this service.
- The BCER will consider whether new fees and levies are needed as part of its annual review.



Alignment with EAO

- BCER and EAO co-regulate solar and offshore wind projects that meet established criteria.
- BCER and EAO established working relationship for major oil and gas projects will continue.
- Synchronized permitting of activities allows for projects to more efficiently navigate both processes.
- BCER regulatory framework disapplies overlapping application requirements for EAO regulated projects.



Regulatory Themes



THEME 1

Environmental Assessment and Protection

- Impacts to Land, Water and Wildlife
- Cumulative Effects Management
- Decommissioning & Restoration



THEME 2

Supporting Reconciliation

- Early and Pre-Engagement
- Indigenous Knowledge and its Protection
- Cultural Heritage Sites



THEME 3

Foster Social Well-being

- Assessment of Community Impacts
- Community Engagement
- Noise
- Crown Land Access
- Shadow Flicker
- Solar Panel Glare



THEME 4

Protecting Public Safety

- Adoption of Codes & Standards
- Setbacks
- Ice Fall & Ice Throw
- Emergency Management
- Physical Security
- Buried Infrastructure
- Batteries & Energy Storage Systems
- Management & Maintenance Programs
- Required Notifications
- Required Reports & Records

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest. The trees are mostly dark green, with some lighter green patches scattered throughout. A river or stream winds through the lower portion of the image, creating a light-colored path. The overall scene is lush and natural.

Operational Summary

Investigative Use Licenses

- Investigative Use Licences (IUL) issued under the *Land Act* authorize use of Crown land for investigative activities
- BCER is currently administering IULs according to terms established under existing Provincial policy
- Term up to 5 years, with possibility for replacement
- IULs are subject to diligent use requirements



IUL Prioritization

- BCER is working on the backlog of IUL applications and replacement requests transferred from the Ministry
- IUL applications can be submitted via AMS and will be assessed for completeness
- Interim IUL guidance (version 2) is available on the BCER website
- Projects short-listed for a Call for Power process or with a direct path to an EPA are being prioritized
- Treating IULs as an internal "project" with metrics



Application Basics

- BCER guidance and manuals – requirements should be clear
- If something is not included in your application – explain why
- IULs must support defined investigative activities – not land banking
- Specificity matters - it signals seriousness and readiness.

Completeness = speed



Engagement

- Pre-engagement with First Nations is foundational
- Rights holder (i.e., other rights holders – e.g., tenure and license holders) engagement is required for completeness
- Tell us what you heard - link concerns → decisions → mitigations



Work with the System

- Where possible, avoid creating new corporate entities for each project
- Take advantage of the 'one-window' approach – bundle where possible
- Take home message: Application completeness is the single biggest driver of overall review timelines





Implementation

Guidance – Next Steps

- BCER is currently preparing updated draft interim guidance to improve clarity and alignment with REPR.
- Target release date in June/July 2026.
- Work ongoing to prepare final guidance materials for the full lifecycle of renewable energy activities.



Upcoming Engagements

- BCER is planning engagement with industry as the interim guidance moves to final guidance.
- Implementation of final guidance will be done in a phased approach, with review opportunities as documents move into final guidance.
- Expected topics include wildlife permits, cumulative effects, land use policies for wind and solar energy projects, ALR approvals, and others.



THANK YOU/
QUESTIONS

BCER

BRITISH COLUMBIA ENERGY REGULATOR