Date: October 28th, 2025

To: Sustainable Jobs Secretariat, Natural Resources Canada

Subject: Submission to the 2026–2030 Sustainable Jobs Action Plan

Dear Secretariat Officer,

On behalf of Electricity Canada, Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC), Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE), and the Toronto Metropolitan University's Diversity Institute (DI), I am pleased to share our joint submission in response to your call for input on the **2026–2030 Sustainable Jobs Action Plan.**

This submission reflects the collective expertise of the organizations most directly engaged in building, training, and supporting Canada's electricity workforce. It offers concrete recommendations to ensure Canada has a skilled, diverse, and resilient workforce required to deliver on its clean energy ambitions. Our submission highlights several key priorities, including:

- Strengthening the linkage between labour market development and the industrial strategy.
- Enhancing collaboration between governments, academia, unions and the electricity Industry on labour market needs and workforce planning.
- Investing in labour market development, including reskilling and upskilling.
- Supporting initiatives aimed at building an inclusive and resilient workforce.

We believe these broad measures, along with the specific actions outlined in the enclosed submission, will help Canada align its labour market goals with its industrial strategy.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and departmental staff to discuss our recommendations in further detail.

Sincerely,

Francis Bradley
President and CEO
Electricity Canada

Cc: Mr. Eamonn McGuinty, Chief of Staff, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

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Electricity Canada Submission to the 2026-2030 Sustainable Jobs Action Plan

Introduction

Electricity Canada, Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC), Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE), and Toronto Metropolitan University's Diversity Institute (DI) are pleased to provide this joint submission to the 2026–2030 Sustainable Jobs Action Plan to support the development of a skilled, diverse, and resilient electricity workforce prepared for the future of work in Canada. Together, our organizations bring the combined expertise of industry, labour market intelligence, equity advocacy, and workforce development. We represent the organizations working most directly to understand and shape Canada's electricity workforce.

Clean, reliable, and affordable electricity is the foundation of Canada's economic competitiveness and its ability to achieve long-term energy goals. The electricity sector is central to industrial transformation. Whether scaling electrification, advancing critical minerals, or supporting clean manufacturing and digital infrastructure, success depends on the availability of a skilled workforce.

Workforce policy is, in effect, industrial policy. Without a strong pipeline of workers who are trained, retained, and supported throughout their careers, Canada risks falling short of its energy objectives while undermining affordability and reliability for consumers. We commend the federal government for recognizing this link in its latest industrial strategy, and we suggest that future policy strategies (e.g. climate competitiveness strategy) also prioritize workforce development.

This submission responds directly to the federal government's consultation questions in the 2026–2030 Sustainable Jobs Action Plan, and provides detailed recommendations on workforce planning, skills and training pathways, and inclusion and retention.

Workforce Planning and Labour Market Data

(Responding to Questions 2 and 3: Access to labour market data, challenges, and priorities for federal collection and analysis.)

The electricity sector is entering a period of unprecedented investment and expansion. Meeting growing demand for electrification, critical minerals, and clean manufacturing will depend not only on infrastructure, but also on the workforce that builds, maintains, and operates it. According to EHRC's *Labour Market Insights 2023-2028* report, the sector will

need nearly 28,000 new workers by 2028 — roughly one quarter of the current workforce. Almost half of core occupations, including lineworkers, engineers, ICT specialists, and project managers, are at risk of shortage. These gaps, if unaddressed, could delay infrastructure projects, increase costs, and undermine Canada's energy reliability.

Workforce planning mechanisms today are fragmented. Federal and provincial data sets do not align, and much of the available information is not sufficiently disaggregated to support equity-based planning. Employers consistently report that they lack access to reliable, forward-looking labour market intelligence. Planning is further constrained by the absence of explicit links between workforce projections and investment decisions.

Given current immigration targets, meeting workforce demand will rely primarily on strengthening pathways for Canadians to enter and advance in electricity careers. Immigration remains a vital complement, but the most significant short-term to medium-term gains will come from expanding domestic training, reskilling, and mobility initiatives.

What's Required: A national mechanism to align labour data with industrial planning, federal-provincial coordination on regulatory processes, and targeted funding to strengthen workforce planning capacity.

Recommendations:

- **Create a national electricity workforce observatory.** The federal government should provide targeted support, building on existing federal investments to EHRC and Statistics Canada to establish a permanent observatory that publishes annual, disaggregated workforce reports. Provinces and territories would be required to share data through formal agreements as a condition of federal workforce development transfers. The observatory should also develop common occupational definitions and a shared language for job classifications across provinces, ensuring consistency.

- **Integrate workforce planning into infrastructure projects.** Governments and provincial economic regulators (e.g. Ontario Energy Board) can provide guidance, tools, and federal funding programs to help utilities forecast labour needs and address skills gaps, with transparent processes that ensure accountability and maintain trust in how funding is allocated and applied.

- **Support regional workforce planning capacity.** Federal cost-sharing agreements with provinces should support regional labour-market mobilization by a convener, such as EHRC, to adapt national forecasts to local conditions. Implementation would require the federal government to negotiate with provinces through Labour Market

Development Agreements, ensuring that specific funding envelopes are earmarked for electricity workforce planning and forecasting.

- **Establish a federal-industry workforce advisory council.** The federal government should establish a senior-level advisory committee comprising representatives from industry associations, unions, and training providers to discuss emerging labour market issues, review forecasts, and adjust workforce strategies. Its mandate should include ongoing review, monitoring, and improvement of workforce mechanisms to ensure they remain adaptive and responsive to labour market realities.

Skills, Training, and Upskilling Pathway

(Responding to Questions 4 and 5: Strengths and weaknesses of current programs, priority actions for upskilling, and federal collaboration with partners.)

Canada's electricity workforce challenge is not just about numbers, but about readiness. Employers report challenges securing apprenticeships and co-op placements, while post-secondary institutions face fiscal pressures that limit program capacity. Without intervention, these systemic gaps will widen just as industrial demand accelerates.

Reskilling and lifelong learning are equally critical. Digitalization, distributed energy resources, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and electrification are creating entirely new skill requirements. Mid-career workers will need accessible pathways to upgrade their skills, often while remaining employed. Today, opportunities for short-cycle learning and micro-credentials are underdeveloped, leaving Canada behind peer jurisdictions.

The skills pipeline is also under pressure. Early outreach to Canadian youth, especially Indigenous youth and those in rural or underserved regions, remains limited. Without strong pathways beginning in high school, the sector risks failing to inspire the next generation of workers.

What's Required: Dedicated support and capacity building measures for training expansion, structured partnerships to modernize curricula, streamlined credential recognition across provinces and territories, and new federal supports for reskilling and early outreach.

Recommendations:

- **Expand training program capacity.** The federal government should continue to support the expansion of targeted programs and partnerships to increase seats in electricity-related programs at colleges, polytechnics, and apprenticeship systems.

This could be operationalized through Labour Market Development Agreements with provinces and earmarked for energy-related fields.

- **Align training with industry needs**. The provincial governments should create grant programs that incentivize partnerships among utilities, unions, and training providers to co-develop curricula. Implementation could be supported through targeted federal grants for curriculum design and placement subsidies for employers that host students or apprentices.

- **Improve labour mobility.** The federal government should work with provinces to accelerate recognition of international and provincial credentials, and to develop accelerated learning and skills testing pathways that lead directly to employment in the electricity sector.

- **Promote early awareness.** Establish private-public partnerships (P3s) to raise awareness of electricity-related careers and support outreach initiatives in schools, including experiential learning and career exploration, with emphasis on Indigenous communities and equity-deserving groups. Implementation would require collaboration with provincial education ministries, school boards, and community organizations.

- **Support mid-career learning.** Expand workforce development programs to include short-cycle training and micro-credentials for electricity sector workers as work-integrated learning inclusive of relevant wrap-around supports.

- **Invest in workforce forecasting tools.** The federal and provincial governments should fund partnerships that link energy system modelling with human resource planning. This could be delivered through innovation programs, ensuring forecasts reflect both energy demand scenarios and workforce supply.

Inclusion, Resilience, and Retention

(Responding to Question 6: Federal actions to diversify the workforce and support inclusion, recruitment, retention, and leadership of underrepresented groups.)

Canada cannot meet its energy goals without mobilizing the full talent pool. Indigenous Peoples, women, newcomers, persons with disabilities, and racialized groups are underrepresented in the electricity workforce. This not only limits equity but also constrains the sector's ability to innovate and meet rising electricity demand.

EHRC's *Power Move* report highlights that retention is undermined by workplace cultures that do not fully reflect inclusive practices, limited advancement opportunities, and a lack of visible role models. Employers also point to systemic challenges such as insufficient childcare, inadequate housing, and limited transportation options in rural and remote regions, which directly limit participation.

Addressing electricity workforce needs will require expanding pathways for Canadians to enter and advance in the sector, while also removing the barriers that continue to limit participation among equity-seeking groups.

What's required: Government investments in wraparound supports, cost-sharing for Indigenous-led initiatives, incentives for inclusive employer practices, and integration of workforce equity outcomes into federal industrial funding.

Recommendations:

- **Scale Indigenous-led training initiatives.** Programs should provide sustained funding for Indigenous-designed and delivered training initiatives tied to regional energy projects. Implementation would require cost-sharing with provinces and territories and Indigenous governance structures to ensure accountability.

- **Address barriers through wraparound supports.** Governments should explore cost-shared programs for childcare, housing, and transportation linked to large energy infrastructure projects. These supports can be integrated into industrial activity financing mechanisms.

- **Support mentorship and sponsorship programs.** Government grants or tax incentives should be introduced for employers that create structured mentorship programs to advance women and equity-seeking groups into leadership positions.

- **Promote visible leadership.** Government communications campaigns, co-delivered with industry, should showcase diverse leaders in energy to inspire broader participation.

The Path Forward for a Sustainable and Resilient Workforce

(Responding to Questions 1, 7, and 8: Priorities for the next five years, foundational actions, and organizational contributions.)

This submission builds on the federal government's ongoing investments in skills training, workforce development, and inclusive employment programs that have supported the electricity sector's readiness to date.

Canada's ability to achieve its long-term energy goals will depend on the strength of its workforce. Infrastructure investments, industrial competitiveness, and clean energy innovation all rely on people who are trained, retained, and supported throughout their careers.

The federal government's discussion paper identifies many of the right themes, such as workforce planning, training, inclusion, and resilience, but stronger attention is needed on how to operationalize these priorities. In particular, workforce planning must be explicitly linked to regulatory and investment processes, and training capacity must be scaled in step with industrial growth.

A sustainable electricity workforce requires:

- Integrated, transparent labour market data and workforce planning, with metrics that are standardized, accessible, and benchmarked.

- Expanded training and upskilling systems that adapt to industrial needs, supported by federal enablement, mentorship, and partnerships.

- Inclusive pathways that remove barriers and engage the full talent pool, with wraparound supports, while promoting innovation and industrial competitiveness.

- Regulatory frameworks that enable retention while balancing affordability for Canadians.

- Continuous improvement and oversight to ensure workforce strategy remains adaptive and responsive to changing industrial and demographic conditions.

Electricity Canada, Electricity Human Resources Canada, Women in Renewable Energy, and Toronto Metropolitan University's Diversity Institute stand ready to work with the federal and provincial governments to advance these priorities. Together, we stand ready to partner with the governments to ensure the electricity sector has the skilled, diverse, and resilient workforce required to power Canada's long-term energy future.

About the Signatories

Electricity Canada is the national voice of the electricity sector, representing generation, transmission, and distribution companies across the country. We advocate for policies that ensure clean, reliable, and affordable electricity while supporting workforce readiness, innovation, and long-term energy security.

Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC) is the national labour market intelligence and workforce development organization for the electricity sector. EHRC produces authoritative research, forecasts labour needs, and develops programs to support workforce readiness, skills development, diversity, and inclusion across the sector.

Women in Renewable Energy (WiRE)/Femmes en Énergie Renouvelable (FER) creates opportunities for women to build connections, mentorships, and leadership pathways within Canada's renewable energy sector. Through programming, events, and partnerships, WiRE works to advance women's participation and leadership at all levels of the energy industry.

The Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University conducts cutting-edge research and designs innovative programs to support underrepresented groups in the labour market. With expertise in diversity, equity, and workforce transformation, the Institute partners with employers, governments, and community organizations to strengthen inclusion in Canada's economy. In 2024, DI's evidence-based programming trained over 3,700 participants, including 525 through the Advanced Digital and Professional Training program, 75% of participants were from equity-deserving groups, and achieved a placement rate of ~90%.

Electricity Canada Members

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ATCO Ltd and Canadian Utilities Ltd, an ATCO Company
BC Hydro and Power Authority
Bluewater Power Distribution Corporation
Canadian Power Holdings
Capital Power
City of Medicine Hat, Electric Utility
City of Red Deer Electric Light and Power
Clearlight Energy
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