

**BORALEX**  
*Beyond*  
RENEWABLE ENERGY



# Community and Indigenous Engagement Plan

Oxford Battery Energy Storage Project

August 12, 2024



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# 1 Introduction

Boralex has been present in the Ontario energy market for over 10 years and is committed to building sustainable relationships based on transparency, communication, and respect for the communities hosting its projects. As a developer and long-term operator, Boralex makes every effort to establish sustainable relationships with the host communities and to respect the environment from the moment a project begins to take shape. This is a testimony to the long-term vision to which Boralex subscribes, working earnestly and diligently to ensure that its projects are received well in the region and effectively integrated with host communities for the duration of their operating lives.

The following describes the Community and Indigenous Engagement Plan (Engagement Plan) associated with the Oxford Battery Energy Storage Project (the Project) and supports an open and inclusive public process.

This Engagement Plan identifies strategic steps to maintain transparency throughout the Project's development, construction, and operation. It will also be used to reflect an understanding of local interests and concerns and proposes a frequency and duration for future outreach activities.

The Engagement Plan will address and build upon the public engagement requirements as set out in the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) Long Term (LT1) Request for Proposals (RFP) and in support of the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities (MTF Class EA), considering general best practices for consultation and engagement.

## 2 Communications Approach

As a developer and operator, Boralex establishes connections with local stakeholders early to best understand the values and concerns of the community so that our projects are designed to integrate with and enhance the surrounding area for the duration of their operation.

Boralex has developed this Engagement Plan based on best practices for engagement and in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) Code of Practice: Consultation in Ontario's Environmental Assessment Process. The Engagement Plan will provide structure and guidance to support effective communication related to internal Project coordination and external engagement.

Following this Engagement Plan allows us to truly understand local interests, so we can address concerns well before construction is underway.

The following describes the strategic steps we have and will take to maintain an open and inclusive relationship throughout our Project's development, construction, and operation:

- Identify a contact list of relevant stakeholders, government agencies, and Indigenous communities, updating this list as the Project proceeds (see Section 3 for identification of stakeholders).
- Set milestones to provide advanced notification to stakeholders, government agencies, and Indigenous communities of engagement opportunities and key Project milestones.
- Engage with the stakeholders identified as soon as possible to share valuable information.
- Build trust through transparent and open dialogue.
- Track and document engagement activities, comments received, and their influence on the Project.

## 2.1 Engagement Objectives

The Engagement Plan provides an outline of engagement opportunities for interested parties so that the Project is well understood by potentially affected stakeholders and their feedback and concerns can be considered and incorporated into Project planning, to the extent practicable. See Section 3 for identification of stakeholders. With that in mind, the following objectives for engagement have been developed:

- Provide consultation opportunities that address the particular interests and needs of stakeholders (including targeted materials and discussions for the public, property owners, government agencies, and Indigenous communities, as appropriate).
- Provide for timely, open, transparent, effective, consistent, and proactive communications.
- Foster and maintain positive and constructive relationships with parties that may be affected by decisions regarding the scope of the Project.
- Build trust, understanding, and support for the Project.

## 2.2 Engagement Process

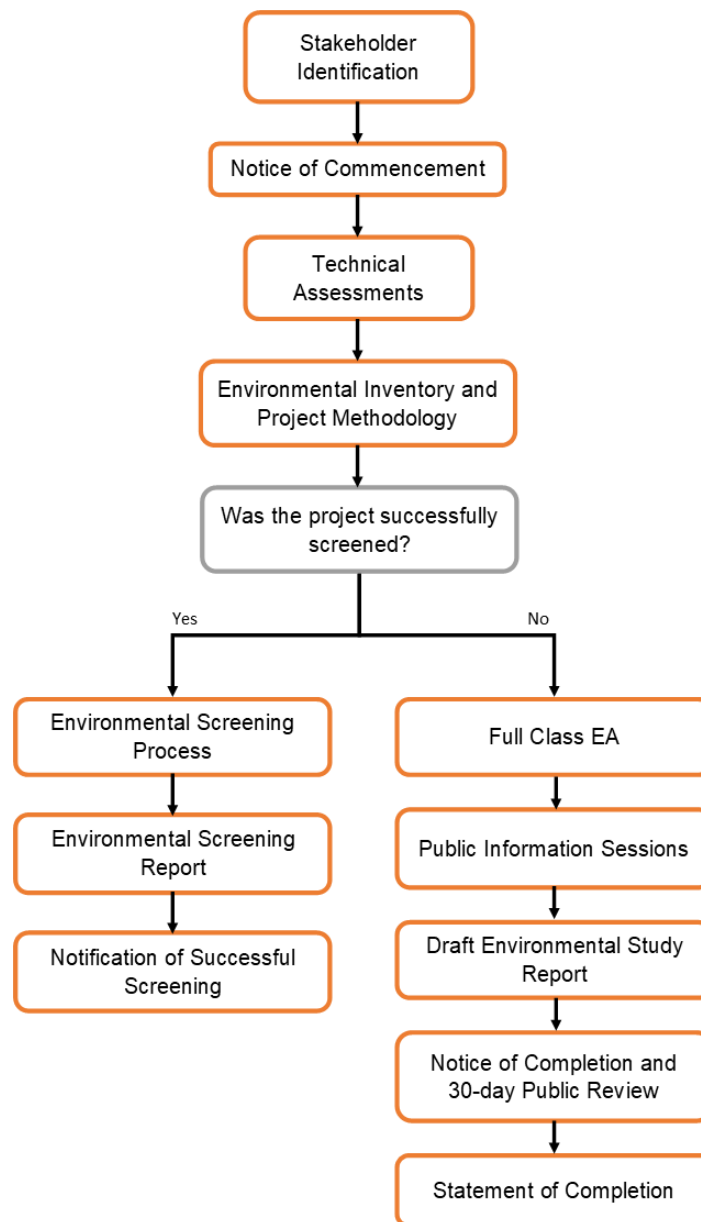
Boralex has started engaging with some stakeholders and is committed to engaging with all interested parties to discuss how the Project fits into the local community, stakeholders' underlying values and concerns, expected timelines, and next steps for the Project. Meetings will continue throughout the development process to keep the public updated on the Project's status and to solicit feedback.

To align with the IESO LT1 RFP submission requirements and timeline, an open house will be held on September 14th, 2023, to solicit feedback from interested stakeholders on the initial Project details. The Open House Invitation details the open house information including, date, time, and location. Mailed invitations will be sent to citizens living near the Project 15 days prior to the Open House, and an advertisement will be run in the Woodstock Sentinel Review and Oxford Review Press. The ad will be posted on the Project's webpage 15 days prior to the Open House.

Figure 2.2.1 represents the Key Consultation Milestones for the MTF Class EA process. Generally, within the MTF Class EA process there are several periods during which feedback will be sought. However, Boralex believes engagement is to be ongoing throughout the life of the Project and will meet stakeholders on an as-needed basis in advance of, through the duration of the MTF Class EA process, and throughout the life of the Project.

Boralex will confirm the optimal approach to meet both the IESO LT1 RFP and the MTF Class EA requirements for the Project, including engagement points required to meet consultation objectives, and number of public meetings.

**Figure 2.2.1 Key Consultation Milestones for the MTF Class EA**





### 3 Identification of Stakeholders and Outreach Strategies

The objective of this Engagement Plan is to engage with potentially affected and interested Indigenous communities, government agencies, members of the public and others (collectively referred to in this document as 'Stakeholders') to gain a better understanding of their issues and interests and how to effectively address these during Project development. Recommendations or comments from Stakeholders will be documented, responded to as appropriate, incorporated into Project documentation, and integrated into the ongoing development of Project design.

The contact list for the Project is expected to evolve throughout the life of the Project based on the level of interest expressed by individuals or additional guidance received by government agencies during the Project life.

#### 3.1 Stakeholders

Stakeholder groups that will be consulted on the Project include:

- Indigenous communities
- Township of South-West Oxford
- Oxford County
- City of Woodstock
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
- Government Agencies
- Utilities
- Members of the Public and Community Organizations
- Non-profit/non-governmental interest groups

Key strategies and considerations to engage these groups are described below.

##### 3.1.1 Indigenous Communities

On behalf of the Crown, the Ministry of Energy and Electrification delegated the procedural aspects of consultation and the Duty to Consult with respect to the project to Boralex. Prior to doing so, the Ministry conducted an assessment of established and credibly asserted section 35 rights and potential project impacts, and identified the following Indigenous communities that Boralex should consult with:

- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Six Nations: Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Chiefs Council (HCCC)
- Six Nations: Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation (Elected Council)

Boralex will contact Indigenous communities to have field monitors/liaisons attend archaeological and/or environmental field work.

As communities are contacted, they will be asked to confirm their interest, if any, in the Project, provide input on how they perceive their Aboriginal or Treaty rights to be affected by the Project, and confirm preferred engagement methods. Project information, particularly on potential archaeological and environmental impacts, will be provided by Boralex to the communities and additional information on specific areas of interest will be provided, as needed.

### **3.1.2 Municipalities and Elected Officials**

Key municipal contacts include:

- Township of South-West Oxford
- City of Woodstock
- Oxford County (Council, Clerk, Operations, Fire, Economic Development, Planning, Engineering)

Consultation with elected officials will form an important part of Project planning, with a focus on early notification of upcoming activities related to municipal meetings and public communication. Prior to any key consultation activities, elected officials will be made aware of what is planned and be provided with an opportunity to discuss the material that will be presented. Consultation will focus on political awareness, to help manage municipal relationships and identify sensitive issues prior to public release. Boralex will lead consultation with elected officials, including identifying key officials to be contacted, and arranging necessary communications and meetings.

### **3.1.3 Upper Thames River Conservation Authority**

Early consultation with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) will focus on confirming whether the proposed Project is within their regulated area. If the Project moves forward within UTRCA's regulated area, the next step will be gathering relevant ecological and flood plain information that will be reviewed to identify key environmental constraints and confirm UTRCA areas of interest.

During the MTF Class EA, we will consider the likelihood of potential impacts to features within UTRCA's jurisdiction and consult with UTRCA as necessary to confirm mitigation measures to reduce those impacts.

### **3.1.4 Government Agencies**

Provincial government agencies that may have a regulatory mandate or decision-making authority linked to the Project will be sent the required notices and can direct Boralex on future correspondence. Following initial contact, the permits and approvals expected to be needed for the Project will be provided for the agencies to confirm that regulatory requirements are met. No federal agencies are anticipated to be included on the contact list given the mandates of the federal agencies, the Project components, anticipated effects, and permits/approvals expected for construction and operations.



Key contact points will include initial Project introductions to confirm interest in the Project, and ongoing consultation based on each agency's level of interest, regulatory issues raised, and appropriate strategies to resolve issues.

Key government agencies that will be consulted on the Project include:

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Infrastructure Ontario
- Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Ministry of Energy
- Ontario Heritage Trust
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

### **3.1.5 Utilities**

Engagement with utilities will be focused on identifying existing and planned infrastructure based on publicly available information, in order to manage potential conflicts.

Key utilities will include:

- Hydro One Inc.
- Ontario One Call

### **3.1.6 Members of the Public and Organizations**

Public consultation is a specific requirement of the IESO LT1 RFP and the MTF Class EA process and will include the issuance of notices at key Project milestones. In addition, information will be provided to the public focused on simplified communications related to Project plans, potential effects, and mitigation measures, with a core focus on the benefits of the Project. Local sensitivities will need to be gauged on a case-by-case basis to confirm particular issues and the need for targeted meetings.

Key organizations will include:

- Local communities, landowners, businesses, and the general public adjacent to the Project
- Other Community Organizations (consumer groups, resident associates, Chamber of Commerce, and interest groups)

## **3.2 Overview of Proposed Consultation Activities**

Stakeholders will be engaged in various ways throughout the Project, including the following general activities. Note that a more detailed schedule of key consultation points and deliverables will be developed.

### 3.2.1 Public Notices

The following public notices will be prepared if an MTF Class EA Screening Report is required:

- Notice of Commencement

The following public notices will be prepared if an MTF Class EA Environmental Study Report (ESR) is required:

- Notice of Commencement)
- Notice of Completion

Notices of Public Meetings will be posted on the Project website (<https://www.boralex.com/projects/oxford/>) and Boralex will arrange for publishing in local newspaper(s). Letters and the accompanying notices will be mailed to the Project contact list.

### **3.2.2 Public Meetings**

Boralex will hold at least one public meeting as required for the IESO LT1 RFP to gather input into Project planning as part of the MTF Class EA process. The need for public meetings may be revisited as the Project progresses, based on issues, trends, consultation needs. All comments received at our Open House will be posted on the official Project webpage.

If a Full Class EA is required, a comment period of a minimum of 30 days will follow the Notice of Completion of the Draft ESR. Comments received will be logged and included in the MTF Class EA.

Boralex will keep written documentation of all consultation activities.

### **3.2.3 Meetings**

Boralex will hold, and remain open to having, ongoing discussions with Stakeholders throughout the life of the Project with the intent to solicit feedback on the Project and resolve any outstanding concerns. Initial engagement will include offers for introductory meetings with key regulators and Indigenous communities, to introduce the Project and answer questions.

### **3.2.4 Document Distribution**

Document distribution will be conducted through the various means of engagement:

- Upon specific request by Stakeholders, the Screening or ESR may be made available for information purposes only (i.e., comments will not be solicited).
- The draft ESR will be made available to the MECP to review.
- If an ESR is completed:
  - Through the issuance of the Notice of Completion, the ESR will be made publicly available for review and comment.
  - Upon request, hard copies of the ESR will be distributed to interested Indigenous communities and government agencies. Electronic copies of the ESR will be made publicly available for download or distribution. The Screening Report will not be distributed, unless specifically requested by Stakeholders.

### **3.2.5 Project Website**

Boralex will maintain a dedicated Project website (<https://www.boralex.com/projects/oxford/>) with information about the Project and relevant documents, including contact information.

### **3.2.6 Record of Consultation**

The results of consultation will be recorded in the Screening Report or ESR through key deliverables, including:

- A consultation chapter that outlines consultation activities, comments received during the MTF Class EA process and responses provided, and how consultation has influenced the Project and the Screening Report or ESR.
- A Consultation Tracking Log (example in figure 3.2.6.1) to track the flow of information conveyed to and received from Stakeholders regarding the Project, including relevant correspondence, notices, and communication items for the Project. The Consultation Tracking Log will document all consultation activities.

**Figure 3.2.6.1 Consultation Tracking Log Template**

Comment Number	Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Name	Comment Source	Date Received	Comment	Response Date	Response	Status
Unique identifier for each comment	Name of group, agency, community	Name of individual commenter	Media type	Date of incoming comment	Details on comment	Date of outgoing response	Details of response	Action item open, closed or post-EA



## 4 Conclusion

Boralex is committed to developing the Project with complete respect for the local community and the environment. We see ourselves as a long-term partner and will adapt to Stakeholder feedback and as well as we can. The Boralex development team remains fully available to answer questions and take effective notes of any comments the Stakeholders may have. Feel free to reach us, **Oxford Battery Energy Storage Project Inc. (the Proponent)**, by phone at 226-753-1939 or by email at [info@boralex.com](mailto:info@boralex.com). To learn more about the Project, visit: [www.boralex.com/projects/oxford/](http://www.boralex.com/projects/oxford/).

