

Friday March 14, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

La Plonge Solar and Battery Energy Storage System Project Under Construction in Northern Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

As First Nations spearhead sustainable and clean energy initiatives across Canada, the Des Nedhe Group (Des Nedhe), the 100% owned development arm of English River First Nation, and Extropic Energy, are proud to announce the development of the La Plonge Solar and Battery Energy Storage System through their collaborative clean energy service provider, Aurora Renewables.

The La Plonge Solar and Battery Energy Storage System, located on reserve in northern Saskatchewan, will generate clean energy at the existing remote distribution system supplying power to English River First Nation. Northern and remote communities, such as La Plonge, have and continue to face significant challenges to reliable power. The new system will help boost the energy grid, give English River First Nation ownership over the infrastructure of their own energy resources, drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create employment and training opportunities for members of the Nation.

This project is a first step of many renewable energy initiatives projected to be developed by Aurora Renewables. It further marks a pivotal moment in the journey towards Indigenous-led clean energy solutions in northern Saskatchewan. The La Plonge Solar and Battery Energy Storage System is a replicable model that will provide long-lasting economic benefits for First Nations while improving quality of life, supporting energy sovereignty and increasing Indigenous participation in the renewable energy sector.

Quick Facts:

- The project, 100 per cent owned by English River First Nation via Des Nedhe, features 750 kW(dc) of ground mount solar energy and 1 MWh of battery energy. It will reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to 500 tCO₂e/year.
- Aurora Renewables is committed to hiring a majority Indigenous crew with five active construction Full-time equivalent (FTEs), of which at least 20 per cent are members of English River First Nation, and funding three individuals receiving specialized training.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) Indigenous Leadership Fund, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan) Saskatchewan Clean Energy Initiative provided \$3,879,458, \$1,313,852, and \$23,800 in funding, respectively.

The La Plonge Solar and Battery Energy Storage System is scheduled to be completed by 2026.

“We are grateful for all the hard work that has brought the La Plonge project together, for the funding support we’ve received, our partners, and the guidance offered from Nation leaders and community. We’ve been exploring sustainable energy power sources for years. It’s important for our economic sovereignty and our self-determination—to be in charge of our own energy.”

– Sean Willy, President and Chief Executive Officer, Des Nedhe Group and President, Aurora Renewables

“La Plonge is the flagship project of Aurora Renewables and it will set the stage for how much we can achieve in the future. Working alongside community, we’re proud to have launched a majority-owned Indigenous clean energy service provider responsible for implementing and overseeing projects from development, to design, build, and throughout operations.”

– Jonathan Palmer, President, Extropic Energy and Vice-President, Aurora Renewables

“By investing in the La Plonge project, we are supporting self-determined climate solutions for the English River First Nation. With the installation of this new system, the Nation will improve access to reliable clean energy, create good jobs and grow their economy, all while cutting pollution and protecting the environment. First Nations have been climate action leaders for generations, and we acknowledge their continued leadership on renewable energy.”

– Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

“Canada works best when Canadians work together. As someone with deep roots in Saskatchewan, I know that the La Plonge Solar Project will create jobs and ensure the province remains a destination of choice for investors looking to expand their operations. The federal government is a confident supporter of Indigenous-led solar energy, which is providing incredible opportunities for communities to share in the economic benefits of natural resource and energy development in their own ways and on their own terms. This project will create jobs and wealth, ensure supplies of affordable and clean energy, and have lasting impacts for generations to come.”

– The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

Media Contact

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About Des Nedhe – Established in 1991 by English River First Nation (ERFN), the Des Nedhe Development Corporation was designed to grow sustainable employment and business opportunities for ERFN community members. Today, Des Nedhe continues this commitment by maintaining a diverse portfolio of business operations in the property management, retail, utility, construction, mining and professional services sectors. <https://desnedhe.com/>

About Extropic Energy – Extropic Energy Inc., based in Kelowna, British Columbia, is an engineering firm specialized in holistic energy modernization. Using a 3D digital twin project delivery approach, Extropic’s services encompass microgrids, building energy systems, EV charging, solar, energy storage, mission critical environments, and telecommunication systems. <https://extropic.ca/>

About Aurora Renewables – Based in Saskatoon and with service locations in Bonnyville, AB and Kelowna, BC, Aurora Renewables is an Indigenous clean energy turn-key service provider. Aurora Renewables provides solar power and microgrid solutions to the industrial, commercial, grid scale, farm and residential markets. <https://aurorarenewables.ca/>