



Town of Port Hawkesbury

Report to Council and Community

Smart Energy Conference 2026 – Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Introduction

The Town of Port Hawkesbury was pleased to participate in the Smart Energy Conference 2026 held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This annual gathering brings together leaders from government, industry, and academia to explore practical solutions and emerging opportunities in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Our participation reflects the Town's continued commitment to sustainable growth, energy innovation, and positioning the Strait of Canso region as a strategic hub for clean energy development in Atlantic Canada.

We were fortunate to be asked to present at the Smart Energy Conference – with 3 other presenters representing local government and Indigenous initiatives who are moving clean energy initiatives forward (HRM, Bridgewater, Port Hawkesbury, and Potlotek).

(Presentation to be added in Appendix)

Conference Overview

The Smart Energy Conference 2026 focused on key themes including:

- Clean electricity and grid modernization
- Industrial decarbonization
- Community-led energy solutions
- Energy affordability and reliability

- Workforce development and economic transition

Across all sessions, a consistent message emerged: municipalities are critical partners in enabling Canada's energy transition. Local governments play a central role in land use planning, infrastructure readiness, community engagement, and investment attraction.

Key Takeaways for Port Hawkesbury

From a municipal perspective, several insights are directly relevant to the Town of Port Hawkesbury:

1. Infrastructure Readiness is Essential

Communities that are prepared with serviced land, port access, transportation networks, and clear regulatory pathways are best positioned to attract clean energy investment. These are areas that are important focuses as we pursue the differing emerging and existing clean energy sectors.

2. Regional Collaboration is a Competitive Advantage

The Strait of Canso region's integrated assets—deep-water port, rail connectivity, airport, proximity to energy-intensive industry, proximity to market and global energy needs on the east coast, and available land—align strongly with national priorities for energy development. Regional collaboration is critical to ensure we are promoting, developing and advocating for the Strait area as a destination for clean energy growth.

3. Affordability Must Remain a Priority

While advancing clean energy projects, there is a clear expectation that governments must ensure energy remains affordable for residents and businesses. This is one point that I included in my presentation about how we can integrate clean energy into local use so that benefits are realized in the community as well as for export.

4. Workforce Development is Urgent

The transition to clean energy will require targeted training and partnerships to ensure local workers can benefit from emerging opportunities. For Port Hawkesbury we are so fortunate to have the NSCC and Nautical Institute who are pivoting to enable clean energy workforce training, with their new wind turbine technician program beginning this fall (2026).

Monday Session Highlight: Green Hydrogen

A key highlight of the conference was the Monday session focused on **Green Hydrogen**, which examined the role hydrogen can play in decarbonizing heavy industry, transportation, and export markets. The Deputy Mayor was able to attend the Monday session and share his takeaways.

Key Insights from the Session:

- **Atlantic Canada is well-positioned** to become a global supplier of green hydrogen due to strong wind resources and access to international shipping routes.
- **Port infrastructure is critical** for hydrogen production, storage, and export—an area where Port Hawkesbury and the Strait of Canso hold a distinct advantage.
- **Project readiness and timelines matter**—jurisdictions that can streamline approvals and provide certainty will attract early investment.
- **Partnerships are essential**—successful hydrogen development will require collaboration between municipalities, provinces, Indigenous communities, and private sector proponents.
- **Challenges exist**- geopolitical environment, high cost of production of production and distribution.
- **Different types of Hydrogen**- Green hydrogen is a low carbon hydrogen produced from renewable energy, Blue hydrogen is produced from natural gas with carbon capture and storage. There is natural hydrogen deposits across the province mapped out by Dept of Natural Resources.

Relevance to Port Hawkesbury:

The discussion reinforced that Port Hawkesbury is strategically positioned to participate in the green hydrogen economy:

- Existing industrial base and energy demand
- Deep-water port capable of supporting export
- Established transportation connections (rail, road, air and port/marine)
- Availability of land for large-scale energy projects

This aligns with ongoing regional conversations and positions the Town to play a meaningful role in future hydrogen development initiatives.

Implications for the Strait of Canso Region

The conference discussions strongly validate the Strait of Canso as a location of national significance in Canada's clean energy future.

Opportunities identified include:

- Clean fuel production (including hydrogen and derivatives)
- Industrial decarbonization projects
- Energy storage and transmission infrastructure
- Expansion of port-based energy exports

The region's multi-modal transportation network continues to be a defining competitive advantage.

Next Steps for the Town of Port Hawkesbury

Based on insights gained at the conference, the Town will continue to:

- **Advance investment readiness** through planning, infrastructure alignment, and proactive engagement with developers
- **Strengthen partnerships** with Indigenous, provincial and federal governments, industry leaders, and regional partners (like the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce)
- **Support workforce development initiatives** in collaboration with educational institutions and training providers (like NSCC/Nautical Institute)
- **Advocate for affordability and community benefit** in all energy-related developments (efforts have been underway to create a strategy)
- **Position the Town as a key partner** in emerging opportunities related to green hydrogen and clean energy (the Grow Port Hawkesbury Committee to continue to engage and build momentum with Town staff and advise Council as opportunities present themselves)

Conclusion

The Smart Energy Conference 2026 reinforced that Port Hawkesbury is well-aligned with Canada’s clean energy priorities. The Town’s strategic location, infrastructure, and leadership approach position it as a strong contributor to the transition toward a sustainable and competitive energy future.

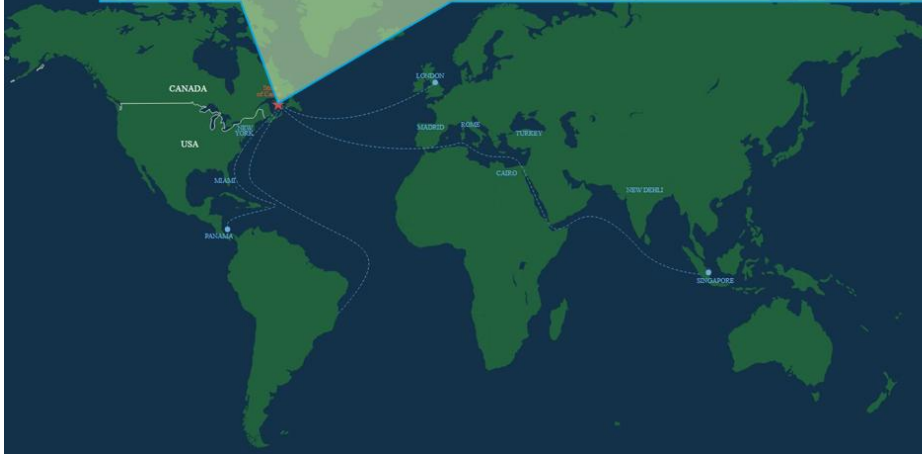
We will continue to engage, advocate, and lead in ways that ensure our community benefits from this transition—through economic growth, job creation, and long-term resilience.

Appendix



Strait of Canso:

Clean Energy Hub - Green Hydrogen, Clean Fuels,
Land-Based Wind & Offshore Wind



PRO-GROWTH
LEADERSHIP:



DIVERSIFIED OFFERING:



STRATEGICALLY
POSITIONED:



TRANSPORTATION
LINKAGES:



MARINE AND OCEANS
SECTOR INNOVATION:



A TRACK RECORD OF
SUCCESS:

Enabling Clean Energy Infrastructure -
*So that infrastructure never becomes a
barrier to investment in clean energy.*





Strait of Canso Domestic Clean Fuels Strategy:
*A plan for clean energy development to support
Emissions Reduction, Affordability and Resilience*



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Slide Notes:

Slide 1 - Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to be part of this important conversation.

I'm pleased to join colleagues from across Atlantic Canada to speak about how communities are helping lead the clean energy transition.

From the perspective of **Port Hawkesbury and the Strait of Canso region**, this conversation is about more than climate goals alone.

Slide 2 - For Port Hawkesbury and our First Nation and Municipal partners in the Strait, it is about **community leadership, affordability, infrastructure readiness, and economic opportunity**.

The Strait region is uniquely positioned in Nova Scotia's and Canada's Energy Future.

We have a strong industrial base, a strategic multi-modal transportation corridor of road, rail, airport and deep-water ice-free port, and existing infrastructure that make the Strait of Canso a natural location for large-scale clean energy development.

We are increasingly being recognized as a hub for **green hydrogen, clean fuels, and offshore wind opportunities**.

What is important from a municipal perspective is ensuring that these developments translate into **real local benefits** for our residents and businesses. That means jobs, economic growth, improved infrastructure, and practical solutions that help improve long-term affordability and energy security.

Slide 3 - Enabling clean energy development is also important, and that means working with developers and planning ahead. And that is exactly what we did with Everwind Fuels regarding their green hydrogen project. The Town of Port Hawkesbury co-owns the **Landrie Lake Water Utility** with the Municipality of the County of Richmond. This utility plays a direct role in enabling green hydrogen development through the Water Supply Agreement signed with **EverWind Fuels** for the proposed green hydrogen and ammonia facility in Point Tupper.

This is a strong example of how municipalities contribute not only through policy, but by investing in and managing **critical enabling infrastructure** like Landrie Lake.

Additionally, our **Little River Reservoir project** is another proactive example, which will expand our watershed capacity and key infrastructure for residential and industrial growth in the future.

Slide 4 - Another important clean energy focus for the Town of Port Hawkesbury is ensuring **clean fuels** are not only produced in our region, but can also be used **locally**.

Through the **Strait of Canso Domestic Clean Fuels Strategy**, we are working with First Nations and municipal partners, industry, and the Province of Nova Scotia to explore opportunities in marine transportation, industrial operations, utilities, and government fleets.

The goal is simple: in addition to exports - we want clean energy development to support **local emissions reductions, affordability, and resilience.**

Slide 5 - At the municipal level, we are also advancing practical community-scale solutions.

Through our partnerships with **Efficiency Nova Scotia** and the **Community Climate Capacity Program**, we have been able to move forward with building retrofits and energy efficiency upgrades at key Town facilities, including our Fire Hall, Food Bank and Civic Centre.

Additionally, we are also expanding EV infrastructure through the installation of **eight Tesla Supercharger stalls at the Civic Centre**, which supports residents, visitors, and our role as a regional service hub.

These community-scale projects deliver measurable benefits through lower operating costs, improved energy performance, and building stronger more resilient communities.

Concluding Statements An important message I'd like to share today, which I am sure my colleagues will also share – is: **“Our community is ready to lead, but we need support.”**

Our biggest challenges are **capacity, infrastructure funding**, and the complexity of **regulations and funding programs.**

When funding streams, stable policy frameworks, and support for technical expertise are in place, communities like Port Hawkesbury can move quickly from planning to implementation.

The clean energy transition presents a tremendous opportunity for our Town and our region. We have and will continue to roll up our sleeves, and work with industry, First Nation and Municipal partners, with our Provincial partners, and with our Federal partners.

Thank you.