SPINNING WIND INTO POWER: INDUSTRY AND ENERGY IN GITXAALA NATION, BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Wind power currently represents the fastest growing renewable energy resource in the world. Disputes over siting, disparities in economic and community benefits, and perceptions of landscape change all surface with renewable energy projects. Recently, renewable energy projects in partnership with First Nations have spread throughout Canada, yet limited studies exist regarding First Nations and renewable energy projects. This research examines proposed wind farms in Gitxaala Nation, a First Nation located near Prince Rupert, on British Columbia’s North Coast. Gitxaala Nation has four wind projects proposed in their claimed traditional territory, including the Naikun Wind Farm, potentially Canada’s first offshore wind project.

Based on three months of qualitative fieldwork in Prince Rupert, BC (May 2012-August 2012), this thesis examines wind turbine projects in the context of Gitxaala Nation’s experiences and explores the shifting terrain of renewable energy development in British Columbia. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted, paired with participant observation and numerous informal conversations. This thesis analyzes how wind turbine development in this context is intricately tied to (and viewed as) large-scale industrial development. For Gitxaala Nation, it is linked to the development of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline. In exploring views surrounding wind power’s introduction, the research examines how wind turbine projects are understood and the factors influencing how they are viewed and either accepted or rejected. It raises questions regarding renewable energies in BC and their place with First Nations, and it begins to address whether renewable energy is viewed differently from conventional resource extraction projects. Additionally, this research evaluates the impacts of renewable energy projects on local communities while exploring whether such projects are desired by and/or beneficial to Gitxaala Nation.
PREFACE

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<tr>
<td>BCUC</td>
<td>British Columbia Utilities Commission</td>
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<td>CanWEA</td>
<td>Canadian Wind Energy Association</td>
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<td>DFO</td>
<td>Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada</td>
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<td>DIA</td>
<td>Department of Indian Affairs</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
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<td>EAO-PIC</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment Office-Project Information Center</td>
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<td>FNEMC</td>
<td>First Nations Energy and Mining Council</td>
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<td>GEM</td>
<td>Gitxaala Environmental Monitoring</td>
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<td>IPPs</td>
<td>Independent Power Producers</td>
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<td>IRP</td>
<td>Integrated Resource Plan</td>
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<td>LNG</td>
<td>Liquefied Natural Gas</td>
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<td>NGP</td>
<td>Northern Gateway Pipeline</td>
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<td>NIMBY</td>
<td>Not-in-My-Backyard</td>
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<td>RETs</td>
<td>Renewable Energy Technologies</td>
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<td>TEK</td>
<td>Traditional Ecological Knowledge</td>
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To the scores of people who helped me with this thesis, either wittingly or unwittingly, thank you. The aid and criticism I received made this thesis possible, and I will never be able to adequately acknowledge the appreciation I owe to those who helped. To the community members of Gitxaała Nation, who graciously welcomed me and taught me so much, thank you. Thanks are also due to all project participants who shared their wisdom, time, and knowledge with me. To the members of Gitxaała Environmental Monitoring – Caroline, Bruce, and Greg – you welcomed me, imparted wisdom, and gave your time and energy to me.

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This work is dedicated to the people of Gitxaala, past, present, and future
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

A. Development in Gitxaala Territory

The ubiquity of fish, permeating dampness, and signs of a struggling economy marked my introduction to the North Coast region of British Columbia. Prior to my arrival, I had failed to grasp the inescapability of resource extraction enveloping the region. But, from the moment my airplane landed on Digby Island near Prince Rupert, my perceptions began to shift. I viewed the expanse of water, rugged coastline, and port activity and realized my image of the region required alterations. The level of port activity and industrial projects astounded me. Although the region’s beauty may distract visitors, those familiar with the area appeared accustomed to the numerous proposed industrial development projects. At present, port expansion projects, proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities, increased oil tanker and ship traffic, and industrial facilities dot the region.

My introduction to Gitxaala Nation, a First Nation located near Prince Rupert on BC’s North Coast, came in the form of two divergent experiences: 1) the National Energy Board’s Joint Review Panel hearings for the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline; and 2) a fishing trip with members of Gitxaala Nation throughout their territory. At the time, I did not comprehend that these different yet intertwined experiences would form the basis of my understanding of the region, its people, and the forces they encounter.

Gitxaala Territory is a region facing continuous resource extraction and the Gitxaala Nation is navigating, adapting to, and resisting these forces. I began fieldwork expecting to

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1 The spelling of Gitxaala is one adopted by community members for their nation. Kitkatla is the English rendition of the name. Unless otherwise noted, I employ Gitxaala to refer to the people of Gitxaala Nation.

2 Industrial-scale development refers to industrial resource extraction. On the North Coast, such resource extraction (primarily fisheries, mining, and forestry) brought both opportunities and disruptions to First Nations. For further discussion, see McDonald (1994), Menzies and Butler (2008), and Wolf (2010).

3 There are approximately 1,800 members of Gitxaala Nation, with roughly 500 living in Lach Klan, the
explore the specifics of wind turbine development in Gitxaala Nation. However, I quickly realized that any exploration of wind turbines would inevitably weave in the region’s history of resource extraction and both the historical injustices and present inequalities faced by Gitxaala Nation. Based on my shifting focus while in the field, the research evolved into an investigation of the unique context of wind turbine development in British Columbia and its linkages to industrial-scale development.² Adopting a lens attentive to the voices of Gitxaala Nation, this thesis explores proposed wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory, its implications for Gitxaala, and the pathways for Gitxaala Nation to establish their own wind turbine project.³

**National Energy Board Hearings**

The Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline (NGP) has received considerable attention in Canada and remains marked by controversy (Canadian Press 2012b). Originating in Alberta, should it be constructed, Enbridge’s pipeline would travel to Kitimat, BC, with oil then transported via barge through Gitxaala Nation’s territory (Enbridge 2012a) (See Figs.1 and 2). I arrived in Prince Rupert in April 2012 for the National Energy Board (NEB) hearings with Gitxaala Nation addressing the project. As part of the consultation required by Canada’s

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² Industrial-scale development refers to industrial resource extraction. On the North Coast, such resource extraction (primarily fisheries, mining, and forestry) brought both opportunities and disruptions to First Nations. For further discussion, see McDonald (1994), Menzies and Butler (2008), and Wolf (2010).

³ There are approximately 1,800 members of Gitxaala Nation, with roughly 500 living in Lach Klan, the contemporary village of Gitxaala (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012). This thesis does not claim to represent a universal Gitxaala perspective but instead hopes to reflect upon facets of Gitxaala’s experiences concerning wind turbine development.
Environmental Assessment (EA) process, and by case law, the government must consult with First Nations when dealing with projects requiring an EA.⁴

⁴ According to the Supreme Court of Canada’s rulings in *Haida* (2004) and *Taku* (2004), the duty to consult First Nations falls with governments. Governments must consult Aboriginal peoples regarding development projects that may impact their communities, even in the absence of signed treaties. These rulings assert that “governments have the duty not only to consult First Nations whose claims may be affected by industrial developments, but also to accommodate First Nation interests in the processes of issuing permits and allocating resources, particularly when government and industry are contemplating the extraction of resources from lands subject to Aboriginal title-claims” (Penikett 2006:219).
Figure 1: Map of Gitxaala First Nation's Traditional Territory (Gitxaala Nation & Province of BC 2006)
Overwhelmed by absorbing the proceedings, meeting members of Gitxaała Nation, and deciphering proposed projects in the region, I struggled to piece the elements together. This
feeling was perhaps apt, resonating with the way project proposals seem to be inundating the region. As I sat at the hearings in preparation for Gitxaala’s Cultural Panel, the social nature of the event surprised me. Though the meeting was intended to discuss the prospect of a pipeline and tankers slicing through Gitxaala Territory, people sipped coffee and snacked, caught up with others (Enbridge lawyers aside), and the cacophony of jokes filled the room of the Museum of Northern British Columbia.

Although Gitxaala Nation petitioned to receive a far lengthier number of hearing days, one house leader told me that six days could not possibly be enough when talking about “thousands of years of culture.” Despite these limitations and constraints, Gitxaala Nation presented their case. As the panel began, discussion centered on Gitxaala Nation’s deep history in the region, their territory, and the “forces of change” Gitxaala has encountered. Ideas of responsibility and the proper way of existing and interacting in the world surfaced. As Ken Innes, member of Gitxaala Nation and Ganhada (Raven) clan, explained:

Not only we — each other as human beings, we live in harmony with the trees, with the rocks, with the birds, the animals, the fish, everything. So that we would be able to co-exist, help each other, heal each other…[It is] like opening a book, this is the history of Gitxaala. And the only way you can learn it is to go out there on the land…You have to be out there and you have to live it and you have to see it because these are really just living histories, living museums of who the Gitxaala people are (Hearing Order OH-4-2011-2012).

Themes emerged as the hearings continued, including the importance of the ocean, plants, and animals, threats to Gitxaala culture, loss of traditional harvesting areas and waterways, and the imperative of resisting the NGP. I was continually struck by the connections between who Gitxaala are and what the territory means to their culture, as

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5 Gitxaala Nation utilized “forces of change” in their opening presentation at the NEB hearings. Among forces included were Christianity, residential schools, requirements of the Indian Act, creation of a reserve system, limitations on fishing practices, and the emergence of fishing licenses.
well as the fear that this project could destroy their ability to harvest food, live off their land, and continue their culture. As Bruce Watkinson, a *Gispuwada* (Blackfish or Killer whale) clan member, asserted:

> You cannot separate the spirituality that we feel when we’re out there. And you cannot separate that from our laws and customs. So in understanding all this, I mean, it’s not just the potential impacts to our beaches and to our physical resources. There’s a really, really strong spiritual component of our culture. When you look at our governance, the spirituality that we have, the utilization of our resources, our diet and our management systems, our language, our customs and traditions, they’re all intertwined. And an impact to one of those elements of our culture impacts all of those elements. And that’s, I guess, why it’s important you understand our culture and the importance of our culture. And again, I don’t know — I don’t know what mitigation measures, what compensation packages could ever make up for the loss of our culture (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012).

Gitxaala’s presence in the region and the importance of relationships (among people, non-humans, and land) frequently arose during the hearings. As I listened to stories and songs, and watched traditional dances, I began to understand that any research I pursued with Gitxaala Nation concerning wind turbines had to confront and engage with Gitxaala’s place and history in the region. Further, it would have to consider the “forces of change” manifest in proposed developments such as the NGP. However, I first needed to experience the landscape in order to understand that “land is Gitxaala much as Gitxaala are this land” (Menzies 2012:163).

**A June Fishing Trip**

*Every bay, every inlet has a story. It will tell you. You don’t need to go to a museum – Ken Innes, Member of Gitxaala Nation, Ganhada (Raven) Clan (Interview June 3, 2012)*

*Everyone knows it’s their [the government’s] fault – Member of Gitxaala Nation (Interview June 4, 2012)*
Observing the NEB hearings, I glimpsed what was at stake for Gitxaala – that the NGP threatens not only their territory, but also their culture. However, it was not until I had the opportunity to join 10 Gitxaala on a fishing trip that I began to experience Gitxaala’s territory, the landscape as a social space, its role in Gitxaala’s culture, and the pressures it faces. Little did I know, agreeing to a request from Gitxaala Nation (via my supervisor) to carry a video camera from Vancouver to Prince Rupert would provide my introduction to Gitxaala Territory. I was subsequently recruited to document a four-day fishing trip through Gitxaala Territory, filming as people both harvested food and recalled memories about their territory and their times spent harvesting.

As I struggled to haul the filming equipment across the docks of MacLane Shipyards, I chastised myself for agreeing to such a venture. After finding the *Northern Monarch*, I stepped aboard the 57-foot seiner that would serve as my home for the week. Once acquainted with those onboard, I noticed a jovial nature and level of jesting unfamiliar to me. Such an atmosphere quickly put me at ease, and I focused my attention on taking it all in. Traveling from Prince Rupert to Lach Klan, then south to Lowe Inlet and finally Calamity Bay, the trip would include harvesting sockeye salmon, halibut, crab, anemone and sea cucumbers, and various shellfish.

As the boat motored to Lowe Inlet nearing the end of the first day, an inchoate picture of Gitxaala Territory materialized. While the beauty of the area cannot be questioned, what I once viewed from my own cultural bias as a striking landscape devoid of resource extraction rapidly

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6 Lach Klan is the contemporary village of Gitxaala (located on Dolphin Island). It is approximately 30 miles outside of Prince Rupert. One can reach Lach Klan from Prince Rupert in about two hours by boat or twenty minutes by float plane.
evolved away from an abstract, static space. Instead, a social landscape formed, imbued with history, inscribed by ancient and modern practices, and composed of spirits, social beings, and lessons (see Basso 2006; Brody 2000; Cruikshank 2005; Menzies forthcoming). I listened to stories of mountains providing protection during floods, of sacred burial grounds, of rivers bloated with fish, and descriptions of harvesting techniques still employed today. Hearing these stories, partnered with the respect and protocol I witnessed, allowed me to glimpse the significance of the territory to Gitxaala’s identity and culture.

Having the opportunity to film and participate in the fishing trip also provided me with the chance to understand the importance of food harvesting to Gitxaala, still widely practiced today (Anderson 2007). One elder expounded, “it’s all seasonal,” noting the end of clam season and the beginning of the first runs of spring salmon. I still recall rowing to rocky islands with the hopes of finding speckled seagull eggs. I had the pleasure of having an elder teach me how to jig, leading to the first fish I have ever caught, a rockfish, which was then cleaned, cooked, and shared by all.

Yet, these experiences are common to Gitxaala. While the joys of food harvesting and being on a fishing boat were personal highlights, they were tempered by threats to Gitxaala Territory. For me, contrasts characterized the most telling experiences – being on the water with joking individuals and then having these experiences cut short when those onboard were reminded of encroachments to Gitxaala Territory. On the boat, I had my first exposure to the very real encroachments Gitxaala encounters. Whether a BC Ferry jetting by at high speeds or a federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) skiff threatening to monitor our catch, these
As these tangible incursions sped by, those on the boat joked that I must capture the moment on film, wanting proof and an acknowledgement of the events. One harvester divulged to me, “Everyone knows it’s their fault,” referring to the government, DFO, and ‘the abalone story’ – a story of government betrayal and crashing abalone populations in Gitxaala Territory (Interview June 4, 2012). In Gitxaala, traditional harvesting practices restricted abalone (bilhaa) harvesting to during the lowest tides (instead of diving for abalone as commercial fishers do), thus fostering sustainable abalone management. A government-sponsored research project concerning abalone was conducted in Gitxaala in the 1970s; the government explained to Gitxaala that the project would assist in protecting local abalone populations by identifying and protecting local harvesting grounds (Menzies 2004:22). After careful consideration, Gitxaala agreed to assist in the project. However, once researchers left, commercial dive boats emerged in locations Gitxaala described to researchers, devastating the abalone population and leading to the closure of the fishery in 1990 by the DFO. Community members felt betrayed by the government (Menzies 2004:22).

Through numerous stories and recollections, partnered with my shock at witnessing ferries and DFO boats bisecting Gitxaala Nation’s water and territory, I began to grasp the prevalent threats to Gitxaala. “Everyone knows it’s their fault” infiltrated my thoughts. In navigating the changes their territory may face resulting from the NGP, increased tanker traffic, LNG facilities, and port expansions and container terminals, Gitxaala may face scenarios similar

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7 The region is experiencing a rise in tourism from cruise ships, with 2003 marking the first instances of cruise ships stopping in Prince Rupert. When BC Ferries are on their summer schedule, members informed me that ferries pass through once a day. This development brings with it increased ships (both large and small), day tours, and environmental impacts (Butler and Menzies 2007:25).

8 Abalone have been harvested and utilized by indigenous peoples for millennia for food, trade, and decoration. In the late 1970s, abalone populations on BC’s North Coast crashed as a result of increased, non-Aboriginal commercial fishing, and in 1990 Canada’s Department of Fisheries and Oceans closed the fishery. See Menzies (2010; 2004) for a more complete analysis of abalone picking in Gitxaala Territory.
to ‘the abalone story.’ Reflecting on Gitxaala’s abalone harvesting, I wondered, would the story continue to be the same? Does the ‘opportunity’ of wind turbine development differ from Gitxaala’s previous experiences, and what roles will government and industry play?

B. Introduction to Wind Turbines and Renewable Energy Development

Renewable energy technologies unfold in local contexts in specific ways. Likewise, historical power relations unfold in environmental conflicts in distinctive ways (Agrawal 2005; Braun 2002; Li 2005). Renewable energy development does not exist outside this context. Yet, these dynamics are often overlooked. By ignoring particular histories of local communities, the underlying logic of renewable energy development remains unexamined. Upon traveling through Gitxaala Territory and observing the NEB hearings, the magnitude and background of resource extraction in the region influenced any exploration of wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory.

This research asks: What factors contribute to how wind turbine projects are understood within Gitxaala Nation and how do these factors influence acceptance or rejection of these projects? Proposed wind farms\(^9\) in Gitxaala Nation are explored through an acknowledgement of the unique context and moment currently unfolding on the North Coast. Gitxaala’s distinct historical and cultural lens informs how development is viewed. During fieldwork, views surrounding renewable energy development were subsumed within broader discussions of development and resource extraction, and individual projects were understood within a larger

\(^9\) Wind farms “bring together groups of wind turbines to produce enough electricity to power thousands of homes” (CanWEA 2008). Wind farms, also called “large wind,” differ from “small wind.” “Large wind” provides electricity to the electric grid, rather than to a home or business. “Small wind” usually involves either a small or medium turbine powering a house or farm (CanWEA 2008).
picture of energy development in the region. Through an exploration of wind turbine development in Gitxaala Nation, particular histories, political relations, and cultural understandings play a critical role in comprehending the complexities and implications of the wave of projects (renewable and non-renewable alike) in the region.

Currently, Gitxaala Nation has four proposed wind farms in its territory,¹⁰ including the Naikun Wind Farm, potentially Canada’s first offshore wind project. This thesis examines linkages between resource extraction and wind turbines in Gitxaala Nation and the structural hurdles that Gitxaala and other First Nations throughout BC face in navigating the renewable energy industry. Renewable energy is used as a lens through which to view resource extraction more broadly on BC’s North Coast. Section 2 situates this thesis: research context, Gitxaala and regional resource extraction, basics of wind power, and methodology are discussed. Section 3 explores wind turbine development on the North Coast. Wind power’s introduction and its linkages to resource extraction and a larger energy infrastructure are investigated. By exploring ‘green’ and ‘renewable’ energy and their reception in Gitxaala, by investigating wind turbines and their links to the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, and by contrasting the associations Gitxaala draw versus those of project proponents, this thesis argues that wind turbine development is an extension of resource extraction. Section 4 builds on the previous section by investigating the renewable energy industry and BC Hydro from the lens of a First Nation seeking involvement in the renewable energy sector. It is found that a shifting terrain and instabilities, fragmented organization, absence of clarity, and lack of space for First Nations as

¹⁰ In November 2012, Sea Breeze Power Corporation began pursuing a potential project in the region, the Tuck Inlet Wind Farm Project. Five meteorological towers, which monitor the potential wind resources available in the region, are planned for construction (Thomas 2012). Sea Breeze is hoping to gather wind data in 2013 but is not far enough in the process to know if a wind farm is feasible.
project proponents translate to confusion and incoherence for involved parties. Section 5 concludes with a return to the NEB hearings and the June fishing trip. A discussion of how Gitxaala Nation navigates these structural factors and what this may mean for the development of their own wind turbine project ensues, ending with an exploration of emergent questions.

Wind Turbines and Public Acceptance

In exploring renewable energy, there exists “a common discourse stressing the role of renewables – and particularly wind – in fighting climate change” (Szarka 2004:317). Yet, while renewable energy projects, including wind turbines, are often desired at broad scales, they are frequently resisted locally. From the single wind turbines of bucolic rural scenes to industrial-scale wind farms, a wide range of wind projects exists. Variations in acceptance underscore complexities surrounding wind-generated power, from the controversial Cape Wind project in Massachusetts to widely supported projects in Denmark (Burkett 2003; Pasqualetti, Gipe, and Righter 2002b). So, while the concept of wind power appears to enjoy broad support, proposed projects are plagued by variations in level of acceptance and mired in dispute.

Further complicating matters, wind turbines possess unique qualities. Its site-specific nature, partnered with its visibility and expansiveness, contributes to sometimes visceral reactions. Wind power’s ‘landscape problem,’ or its unavoidable visibility and subsequently intrusive nature, continues to plague its acceptance (Pasqualetti, Gipe, and Righter 2002a:4). Described as lavatory brushes in the air, monstrosities, ‘machines in the garden’ (to use Leo Marx’s coinage), and beautiful works of technology, public opinion covers a spectrum (Pasqualetti 2004:3). The vast differences surrounding public acceptance of wind power,
coupled with its rapidly growing presence and its role in the energy debate, make for a rich field to explore.\textsuperscript{11}

This thesis engages with literature surrounding acceptance or rejection of renewable energy projects and is in dialogue with theories on factors influencing the siting of such projects. Social science research on wind turbines emerged in the 1980s and has typically been problem-based. In exploring local opposition, most research focused on the specific properties of the technology or the process of energy deployment (Devine-Wright 2011:57). Such work is often concerned with barriers to project implementation and seeks to identify specific reasons for negative attitudes (Devine-Wright 2005:126). Various theories account for discrepancies in local responses to wind turbines, with public acceptance increasingly recognized as pivotal in implementation of renewable energy projects (Toke 2005). While NIMBYism (‘Not-in-my-Backyard) once figured prominently in explaining opposition, this theory is generally recognized as too simplistic. To date, no theoretical framework has replaced it (Haggett 2011; Wolsink 2004).\textsuperscript{12} As Devine-Wright notes, “genuine understanding of the dynamics of public acceptance

\textsuperscript{11} There is limited coherence in the literature as to what constitutes “‘public acceptance’ or ‘public resistance’…” which has included terms such as public perceptions, public opinion, public beliefs, public attitudes, public awareness, public understanding, social representations or risk perceptions” (Devine-Wright n.d.:2). Wüstenhagen et al. (2007) offer a helpful exploration of social acceptance in relation to renewable energies. They find that social acceptance can encompass socio-political, community, and market acceptance. Socio-political acceptance includes technologies and policies, community acceptance includes specifics of the local context (including ideas such as trust, distributive justice, cost/benefit analysis, or degrees of inclusiveness), and market acceptance includes the processes through which players (investors, firms, and consumers) adopt and support the energy (Wüstenhagen et al. 2007).

\textsuperscript{12} NIMBYism or ‘not-in-my-backyard’ is characterized by a contrast between stable, high levels of public support on a broad level with local opposition to specific projects. NIMBYism holds that those who object to the siting of projects regarded as detrimental or hazardous to their own neighborhood will raise no such objections to similar development projects situated elsewhere. It is often used as a pejorative label describing individuals and communities opposing development. NIMBYism often presumes that opposition is determined by spatial proximity and that opposition stems from personal characteristics of those involved (such as being emotional, lacking factual information, and being selfish) (Devine-Wright 2011:61). More recently, NIMBYism has received criticism. NIMBYism is now understood as too simplistic, overlooking the interplay of various social, contextual, and psychological factors. The notion that opposition is automatically bad has been questioned, as has the model that human behavior is fundamentally motivated by self-interest. Furthermore, recent studies have not supported the
remains elusive” (n.d.:2). Currently, a variety of case studies dominate the literature, but there is now a broader effort to investigate place, place-attachment and perceptions of landscape change, project specificities, the engagement process, trust in institutions, and perceptions of equity and fairness (Devine-Wright 2005; Haggett 2011). Public perception research often focuses on quantitative methods, with surveys dominating the literature. Numerous studies also explore the relationship between perception and social influences, and local participation in the development process (Devine-Wright 2005; Haggett 2011). However, as Devine-Wright argues, the predominant thrust in renewable energy research has focused on ‘sites’ to be developed, best practices for development, and distribution of benefits, rather than focusing on the unique context and place, one imbued with “socially constructed meanings and emotions” (Devine-Wright 2011:62).

Little in-depth, location-based research on wind turbine development has occurred, and no ethnographic studies of wind turbine projects exists. Additionally, the literature’s focus on barriers to wind power development and identification of common denominators in public perception and acceptance – certainly an important task – leaves community-based explanations spatial proximity argument, proving that support may increase after introduction of turbines (Jones and Eiser 2009). See Gipe (1995) and Devine-Wright (2005; 2011) for further discussion.

Place attachment and place-identity theories arose recently as holding significant weight in how wind projects are perceived (and accepted or rejected). Place attachment, or positive emotional bonds between people and valued environments, can either bolster support or opposition to projects, depending on whether projects appear as an opportunity or a threat (Devine-Wright 2005; Devine-Wright and Howes 2010). These studies note symbolic and emotional attachment to place as figuring prominently in acceptance. Extreme visibility of turbines can directly correlate to place attachment. Plagued by a lack of fit with their environment, turbines are often seen as altering sense of place and disturbing the landscape (Poumadère et al. 2011). Currently, place is recognized in literature on risk and wind energy conflicts (Haggett et al. 2004; Simmons and Walker 2005), but there remain relatively few studies exploring public acceptance and place-attachment. Few studies have empirically analyzed this relationship, and there is significant room to incorporate the concept of place in understanding local responses to siting and acceptance of renewable energy projects.

Although unpublished, Lisa Cartwright and Steven Rubin’s recent work begins to fill this void, providing an ethnographic study of wind power in rural Kansa. Cartwright and Rubin (n.d.) explore the interactions and work experiences between farming/ranching and wind power. They investigate the move to ‘harvest’ wind as a crop, the new energy infrastructure emerging on farmlands, rural-urban divisions, and the negotiations between local and distributed power (Cartwright and Rubin:n.d.).
and priorities either obscured or forgotten. Scant attention has been paid to indigenous communities and wind turbine development. Literature surrounding wind turbine development often overlooks or is rooted outside the indigenous communities in which such projects may be situated. To date, no academic literature exists that incorporates indigenous community perspectives on wind turbine projects driven by proponents external to these communities. There has, however, been limited literature surrounding wind turbine projects initiated by specific indigenous groups, particularly in Canada and the United States (Garry et al. 2009; Krupa 2012a). No literature investigates and incorporates Aboriginal responses to wind turbine projects on the North Coast of BC, and the wind projects proposed in Gitxaala Territory are no exception. As Menzies observes, silence in published literature regarding Gitxaala Nation “makes the possibility of writing about Gitxaala and Gitxala’s world important. There is something to say that has not been said publicly in writing” (forthcoming).

Indigenous peoples are crucial actors in wind turbine development. Indigenous perspectives on wind projects proposed on their lands are essential in any assessment of such projects and in understanding perception, siting, and acceptance-rejection phenomena. This thesis attempts to place the experiences and understandings of one First Nation, the Gitxaala Nation, at the forefront of the discussion of wind power development. Wind turbine development in Gitxaala Nation, as explored in this thesis, departs from the extant literature.

While previous research focuses on specific factors and barriers affecting wind turbine siting and

15 While there are many terms used to discuss first peoples in North America, the term commonly used in Canada is ‘Aboriginal.’ When referring to first peoples in North America, I use ‘indigenous’ peoples, but if specifically referencing groups in Canada, I use the term “Aboriginal.”

16 The little that has been researched concerning indigenous responses to wind turbines on BC’s North Coast focuses heavily on policy and planning. Lindsay Galbraith’s research explores the Haida First Nation’s experiences in the environmental assessment process in both the Naikun Offshore Wind Project and the Enbridge Northern Gateway Project (Galbraith 2011).
acceptance, this thesis explores how the potential for wind turbines in Gitxaala Nation is navigated and understood in vastly different terms. Wind turbine development, rather than arising as a new or unique project in Gitxaala Nation, functions as a symbol of a history of development and industrial resource extraction on British Columbia’s North Coast and has the potential to perpetuate historical injustices experienced by Gitxaala. By investigating wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory, one can begin to grasp how Gitxaala Nation, like many indigenous groups, are frequently excluded from the process (and the literature) surrounding such projects. The research also enables a better understanding of how Gitxaala see wind turbine development and their potential for greater involvement in these projects.
SECTION 2: SITUATING THE PROJECT

A. Research Context

Recently, the North Coast region has experienced numerous proposed renewable energy projects, from tidal energy to wind turbine projects. Currently, there are four proposed wind turbine projects in or around Gitxaala Territory. As of November 2012, Sea Breeze Power Corporation proposed to begin gathering wind data on a potential wind project, The Tuck Inlet Wind Farm. Proposed wind farms include the Banks Island North Wind Energy Project, the Mount Hays Wind Farm (both proposed by Katabatic Power), the Mount MacDonald Wind Farm (proposed by Rupert Peace Power), and the Naikun Wind Farm (proposed by Naikun). Located on Kaien Island, Katabatic’s proposed 25 MW Mount Hays Wind Farm was eventually abandoned. Providing around 700 MW of capacity through 250-350 turbines, the proposed Banks Island project would be located on the north end of Banks Island. Mount MacDonald Wind Farm, 3 km southeast of Prince Edward, would generate 250 MW of energy through the construction of 100-150 turbines. Currently, both projects are in the environmental assessment pre-application phase.

First proposed in 2002, the Naikun project would become Canada’s first offshore wind farm if developed, harnessing one of the world’s most significant wind resources, the Haida Energy Field (Province of BC 2011b). Located in Hecate Strait, the first phase of Naikun Wind Farm would provide 396 MW of power and consist of 67-110 turbines. The Naikun Wind Farm covers between 30-60 km² (3,000-6,000 hectares) with wind turbines spaced 1,200 meters between rows and 800 meters between turbines (Matt Burns, Interview September 26, 2012; 17

17 The area covers a 550 km² Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that overlaps with Canadian jurisdiction. In addition to areas claimed by Gitxaala First Nation, the Haida First Nation, Lax Kw’alaams First Nation, and Metlakatla First Nation claim overlapping territories affected by the project. In Area A, commercial crab fishermen also use the ocean space.
Pottinger Gaherty 2007:43). In comparison, a proposed dam in BC’s Peace River region (Site C Dam) would create a reservoir covering 93.3 km\(^2\) (9,330 hectares) and generate 1,100 MW (BC Hydro 2013:4). Naikun’s project could consist of five phases, with the total potential generating capacity consisting of 1750 MW. Naikun has passed the pre-application phase and a certificate has been issued, but the project has been stalled since 2009 and awaits BC Hydro’s next round of power calls (discussed later) (Province of BC 2011b).

In addition to these four projects, Gitxaala Nation is in talks to develop their own wind turbine project, making this a crucial area of study at a pivotal moment in the development of wind energy in the region. Currently, these projects have not come to fruition, with more proposed. Yet, it remains essential to examine responses to these proposed wind projects, given that the area is considered prime for wind energy development.

**B. Gitxaala Context**

Gitxaala are *Git Lax Moon*, or people of the saltwater. Although historically categorized as Tsimshian by anthropologists and linguists (Halpin and Seguin 1990; Miller 2000), Gitxaala maintain their uniqueness both culturally and as a politically distinct First Nation. Tsimshian have been characterized by Euro-Americans as including the Nisga’a, Gitxsan, the Coast Tsimshian, Southern Tsimshian, and Gitxaala (Halpin and Seguin 1990). Such a designation arose from classification around shared cultural and lingual characteristics, including language, geography, and food (Menzies and Butler 2008:131). Given these shared characteristics, Gitxaala has been grouped under the broader Tsimshian category.
Extending along British Columbia’s North Coast and 150 km inland along the Skeena River, contemporary Tsimshian villages include Lax Kw’alaams (Port Simpson), Metlakatla, Gitxaala, Gitga’at, Kitasoo (Klemtu), Kitsumkalum, and Kitselas (Menzies and Butler 2007:445). These contemporary villages remain politically independent, with their own band councils and hereditary leadership (Menzies and Butler 2008:134). Gitxaala acknowledge their connection to their surrounding neighbors. Similar histories, relations through kin networks, overlapping territory claims, and established trade networks are shared by many of the First Nations in the region (Miller 2000) (see Fig. 3). Yet, Gitxaala have and continue to distinguish themselves as unique, for “Gitxaala are the original inhabitants of the coast and thus see themselves as a different people” (Menzies forthcoming).
While Gitxaala once routinely traveled as far south as the Columbia River at the Oregon and Washington border and as far north as Alaska, Gitxaala’s traditional lands and territory (laxyuup) extend from north of Prince Rupert south to Aristazabal Island, into the mainland, and...
out to Hecate Straight (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012) (See Fig. 1). Located on Dolphin Island, Lach Klan is the contemporary village for Gitxaala and considered to be the oldest continually inhabited community in the region. Gitxaala people have lived on the coast since the last ice age 10,000 years ago, if not longer. Archaeological evidence conducted in the region places Gitxaala as inhabiting villages in the region for numerous millennia (Menzies forthcoming). Currently, Gitxaala Nation has approximately 1,800 members, with roughly 500 living in Lach Klan and an additional 1,300 living in Prince Rupert, Port Edward, and throughout British Columbia (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada 2012; Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012). Maintenance of strong social networks despite geographic separation continues today. Despite what might seem like a vast geographical separation between those in Lach Klan and those dispersed throughout the region, social networks remain tight, often maintained through circulating traditional foods (Anderson 2007; Menzies 2010).

Organized by clan, class, and house group, Gitxaala’s social structure is complex. This complexity and structure inform all aspects of Gitxaala culture, for “to be a person in Gitxaala society is to know one’s history, to whom one is related, and from where one comes. This sense of place and belonging is rooted in a living oral knowledge” (Menzies 2010:214). Clan structure plays a central role in organizing society and in maintaining proper relations. Clans include Ganhada (Raven), Gispuwada (Blackfish or Killer Whale), Lax Sgyiik (Eagle), and Lax Gyibuu (Wolf). While every member of Gitxaala is a clan member (clan affiliations affect who one can marry), clans do not exert political authority. Instead, “that rests with the sm’ooygit (hereditary leaders, meaning ‘real people’) and their house groups” (Menzies 2010: 214). Each clan is divided into walp, or house groups, with house leaders (sm’gyigyet, plural of sm’ooygit) who hold political power. Authority of customary leaders continues today, with few decisions made
without the support of leaders and elders (Menzies and Butler 2008:134). Traditional law and kinship structures provide counterbalances to the power of the sm’gyigyet; “when supported by other named members of the walp and associated walps, [this system] provides a significant political economic basis for the control of territories and the labour power of others” (Menzies and Butler 2008:135). Matrilineal arrangements for membership into certain houses serve as “the effective political building block of Gitxaala society” (Menzies 2010:214). Furthermore, hereditary names and titles, passed generationally through the feast system, are integral to Gitxaala society (Menzies 2010; Roth 2008).

Membership into specific houses entails responsibility for certain geographic areas. Those with particular subsets of hereditary names retain access and control over specific territories and key harvesting areas (Menzies 2010:215). In fact, “the regulation of natural resources was and still is, to the extent possible in the colonial context, governed in accordance with the Ts’msyen social organization” (Menzies and Butler 2007:443). Gitxaala territory is governed and divided through the house structure. Hereditary names play a pivotal role, with much power vested in them. Hereditary names are linked to multiple facets of Gitxaala culture, including history, crest images, and rights and responsibilities (Menzies 2010: 215). As Menzies and Butler note, “names are akin to social positions in the structure of power. The more prominent a name, the higher the rank and the greater the capacity to control the labor power of other members of a walp” (2008:135).

Government attempted to disrupt Gitxaala and Aboriginal social structures, cultures, and territories. A pivotal legislative mechanism managing Aboriginals and Aboriginal lands in Canada emerged in the Indian Act (Tennent 1990:45). The Indian Act established reserves and
defined them as federal crown lands to be held in trust (Tennent 1990:45). Federal attempts to undermine traditional governance structures intertwined with the Indian Act and the creation of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) in the 1870s, which gave sweeping regulation powers over reserves and First Nations to the Minister of Indian Affairs and its officials. The Indian Act contributed to the expropriation of First Nations from their land by defining boundaries, managing Aboriginal populations, creating Indian reserves, and imposing Euro-Canadian legal principles on First Nations (Harris 2002; McDonald 1994; Menzies and Butler 2008; Tennent 1990). Thus, state control of resources and territories extended. Moreover, the act allowed the DIA to impose a Chief and Council structure, which “intended to induce bands to copy the municipal style of local government” (Tennent 1990:45). Elected Council (composed of thirteen councilors serving three year terms) were presided over by an elected head Chief; the Chief and Council structure has the power to tax and serve fines and make rules and regulations concerning schools, social services, and reserve lands (Harris 2002:257).

In Gitxaala, authority of the hereditary leadership continues today. As previously stated, hereditary leadership in Gitxaala is composed of the sm’gyigyet (singular, sm’ooygit, meaning ‘real people’), chiefs who hold specific rights and responsibilities. These house leaders form the source of political power and authority regarding the territory; ownership, access, and use-rights of resource gathering locations are governed by house groups (Menzies forthcoming). The sm’ooygit is the ranking hereditary leader (the house leader of the most powerful house group, in the dominant clan). Thus, the sm’oogit’s authority is tied to the prestige of the house group.

Governance in Gitxaala can be viewed as a “contemporary concern with ancient roots” in rank and status, connections between place and person, and presence of history (Menzies
forthcoming). In fact, “few decisions can be made or enacted without the support of the established elders and leaders” (Menzies and Butler 2008:134). Hereditary leadership remains intact. Both the elected Chief and Council work collaboratively with hereditary leadership on territorial decisions, while the Council makes decisions regarding the management of the reserve and reserve services. The Band Council manages reserve lands (including water, sewer, and social services), while the hereditary leadership holds authority and jurisdiction over the laxyuup (territory). At the conclusion of a community governance workshop held in 2008, Gitxaała reasserted that the hereditary system would continue to form the basic structure of Gitxaała governance (Menzies forthcoming).

Gitxaała Nation’s traditional laws, or ayaawx, encompass a variety of practices and customs. Chief Elmer Moody of the Gitxaała Nation (Laxgibu hereditary leader and Chief Councilor), describes ayaawx:

[Ayaawx are]...the laws we, as a Nation, must follow... It dictates our practice and custom. It dictates the relationship that we have with one another as well as the relationships that we have with land and nature...It’s not just a reference to how we treat one another as people but how we treat the land as well; how we treat the water and how we treat the resources that are within our traditional territories (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012).

Thus, relations among humans, non-human people, and place are of paramount importance (Menzies and Butler 2007). While Gitxaała continue to utilize marine and terrestrial resources for commercial, trade, and subsistence usage, “their resource use is premised upon a conservative, need-based level of exploitation” (Butler and Menzies 2007:21). Such a social basis for sustainable resource use is captured in Gitxaała’s concept of syt guulm goot (being of one heart), whereby reciprocal relations between humans and non-humans are formed on trust,
respect, and retribution. Furthermore, *adawx* (history) remains tied to oral tradition and assists in establishing the authority and jurisdiction of *smgigyet* (as opposed to elected council).

Returning to Chief Elmer Moody, “*adawx* itself is a description of how our people learn morals, values, beliefs. And the teachings of those morals, values and beliefs are again not just in reference to the treatment of one another but how we treat or how we interact with nature.” (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012). Gitxaala’s *adawx, ayaawx*, social structure, stories and traditions, and understandings of reciprocal relations form the basis of how Gitxaala live today, playing an integral role in every aspect of Gitxaala culture and life. This includes how development projects are approached and evaluated. How Gitxaala approaches such projects also links to BC’s treaty process. Currently, Gitxaala is not involved in the treaty process.

Gitxaala was previously involved with the Tsimshian Tribal Council (formerly the Council of the Tsimshian Nation established in the 1990s) in the treaty process. However, the Tsimshian Tribal Council disbanded in 2004 with the withdrawal of Lax Kw’alaams from negotiations, with Gitxaala withdrawing shortly thereafter. Gitxaala has not entered into treaty negotiations since. As such, Gitxaala Nation’s traditional resource-use rights are unextinguished under Canadian law, since a treaty was never signed.

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18 Both federal and provincial governments have embarked on settling land claims through the treaty process. While it is outside the scope of this thesis to adequately discuss the treaty process in British Columbia, it has received considerable attention and has proven controversial in BC. In *Calder v. British Columbia Attorney General* (1973), Aboriginal title to land was recognized and affirmed. For areas of Canada that had not yet joined the Dominion at the time of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the court ruled that title had never been lawfully extinguished or surrendered if a treaty had not been signed. Since the ruling, only a few treaties have been ratified in BC, with many First Nations withdrawing from the process entirely. Numerous scholars contend that political recognition does not transform ongoing colonial relationships (see Coulthard 2007; Woolford 2005). Furthermore, for provincial and federal governments, certainty regarding Aboriginal rights (through treaties) continues to be sought; by “containing a set of Aboriginal rights within a physical and legal framework,” certainty for governments, industries, and investors is secured (Blackburn 2005:587). For further discussion of treaty-making in BC, see Blackburn (2005), Penikett (2006), and Tennent (1990).
C. Development Context

Gitxaala and the region bear the marks of their history. While the rugged terrain and its location may mislead some into believing the landscape is pristine, isolated, and devoid of human modification, this is not the case. As researchers observe (Cronon 1983; Deur and Turner 2006; Langdon 2006; Menzies 2012), North American landscapes are shaped and produced by millennia of interactions. For Gitxaala, the territory is their home, and evidence of stone fishing structures, ancient villages, and contemporary camps and anchorages dot the territory and are testament to such interactions. Commenting on the landscape, Menzies notes that Laxyuup Gitxaala “neither is nor was a pristine wilderness space in which nature wrote her own story. Laxyuup Gitxaala is the outcome of millennia of interactions, purposeful interventions, and human disturbances: this fact is what makes it the place it is today” (2012:181). A pre-European contact landscape is remarkably recent (three generations), and “pre-industrial levels of resource abundance and the impacts of changing technologies are part of the TEK [traditional ecological knowledge] of this area” (Butler and Menzies 2007:19-20). The land and water function as dynamic, social spaces, cultivated and shaped for millennia. Gitxaala harvested and traded extensively. Various fishing technologies allowed for effective harvesting of large quantities of fish, regulated by traditional structures of resource management (see Menzies and Butler 2007). An annual cycle of resource harvesting, where entire extended families moved from central villages throughout various resource-gathering sites, existed as late as the 1960s (Menzies and Butler 2007:445). Gitxaala people continue to shape where they live, fishing, hunting,

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19 Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), often also described as indigenous knowledge (IK) or local knowledge (LK), has received considerable attention (Agrawal 1995; Berkes 1999; Nadasdy 2003). Indigenous knowledge (with TEK defined as a subset of IK) is defined as “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission” (Berkes 1999:8).
harvesting, and managing their environment. Gitxaala continue to harvest and process food, including seaweed, seagull eggs, salmon, oolichan, halibut, and seal (Anderson 2007).

The region also bears other marks, those of extractive industries. The 1800s and early 1900s brought social change and industrial resource extraction. Discussed in Menzies and Butler, “the key feature of BC’s history is the transformation from the chiefly economies to industrial resource extraction capitalism” (2008:135). Gitxaala are active participants and integral in the industries in the region. Menzies (forthcoming) notes how indigenous peoples “intervened, accommodated, and resisted the rise of industrial resource extraction capitalism.” Forestry, fishing, and the fur trade proved integral, with industrial capitalism playing a central role in influencing and shaping networks and alliances. For the first time, wage labor and commodity production arose in First Nation communities with the introduction of the nascent timber trade (Menzies and Butler 2008:135). Yet, it is important to note that the incorporation of wage labor did not (and does not) necessitate an end or shift to a single cultural framework. Instead, it is more appropriate to view such “adapting to and absorbing new forms of economic activities…as indigenous peoples taking advantage of an opportunity” (Menzies and Butler 2008:136; see also Wolf 2010).

With the arrival of the Hudson Bay Company in 1826, First Nations in the area began to harvest firewood for those at the fort. However, it was not until 1857 that an “indigenous forestry worker began to emerge,” signaled by the first logging expeditions that ran uninterrupted by the fishing season (Menzies and Butler 2008:136). The entrance of Tsimshian members into

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20 I use ‘extractive industries’ here in the way that Butler and Menzies (2007) employ it. The term implies both positive and negative dimensions, providing opportunities and transformations while also impacting local environments and cultures.
wage labor should be viewed as an attempt to take advantage of the economic and social opportunities. In fact, those entering the wage labor market entered as members of their *walp*, and their entrance depicts “the continuous practices of the *Sm’gyigyet* developing *walp* members and their labour power” (Menzies and Butler 2008:137). Timber harvesting and involvement in sawmills, as encouraged by the Hudson Bay Company, “was thus a critical entry point for the Ts’ymsen people into the waged economy and into the large-scale commercial production of timber products,” but was simultaneously tempered and mediated by customary practices (Menzies and Butler 2008:137).

Fishing and canneries also played a significant role in the development of the region, where canneries served as the main markets for timber from sawmills. The first salmon cannery, built on the Skeena River in 1876, ushered in a new era. At the height of the over eighty years of operation, more than 40 canneries speckled the region (Menzies and Butler 2008:138). Most of these canneries were built on traditional Tsimshian fishing areas (Menzies and Butler 2008). First Nations in the region provided much of the initial labor and fish for these industries, but this gave way to a gradual displacement from the industry (Harris 2008; Menzies and Butler 2007). Various policies combined to displace First Nations, including building canneries on traditional sites (disrupting traditional harvesting patterns), replacement (as producers and workers), cannery ownership of drag seine sites, the closure of drag seine sites by the Department of Fisheries in 1964, and the refusal to grant drag seine licenses to Aboriginals up until the 1920s (Anderson 2007; McDonald 1994; Menzies and Butler 2007; Newell 1993). Fishing practices

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21 British Columbia’s reserve system commenced with the first reserve in Victoria harbor in 1852, marking the beginning of expropriation of First Nation land. A reserve system opened land for settlement and development. Small reserves are a hallmark of the BC reserve system, created to foster industry and provide cheap labor (Harris 2002; Menzies and Butler 2008). The reserve system, in conjunction with natural resource regulation, combined to “expropriate First Nations land and resources and to create a dependent labor force for the developing industries” (Menzies and Butler 2007:447).
morphed into a criminalized activity, where First Nations were permitted social and ceremonial harvesting rights but were increasingly excluded from commercial fishing (for economic gain). The canneries still functioned as an avenue for continuing Aboriginal networks and as pivotal points for inter-indigenous trade (Menzies and Butler 2008:141). But, as a result of devastating policies and regulations, First Nation fishermen found themselves jettisoned from the industry. For the first time, Gitxaala fishermen (among others) were without jobs, having previously experienced 100 percent seasonal employment up to the 1960s (Menzies and Butler 2007:448).

Despite these devastating policies, it is important to note that Gitxaala, as well as Tsimshian communities, continue “with a sense of self and history intact” (Menzies and Butler 2007:445). In spite of these various changes and adaptations, Gitxaala remain “a nation of fishers with a strong set of social values and practices that are rooted in their adaawk (history) and ayaawk (laws)” (Menzies and Butler 2007:445). The emergence of these new forms of economic activity should be viewed as processes that did not simply exert external pressures on a passive population. Instead, what emerged were a series of responses and actions by an indigenous people adapting and taking advantage of opportunities and new forms of economic activity. Gitxaala’s ability to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities continues today and is an important point further discussed in later sections.

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22 See Harris 2008 for further discussion.
D. Basics of Wind Power

Wind power, or “the conversion of wind energy via the use of turbines into…electricity,” has been employed for thousands of years (Poumadère et al. 2011:717). By the 1930s, turbines for electricity had grown significantly, and the 1970s and 1980s saw tremendous growth in the commercial wind turbine market. Currently, China, the US, Germany, Spain, India, and the UK dominate the wind energy field. While most countries possess the capability to develop wind farms, the site-specific nature of wind constrains projects. Wind power and duration prove paramount in siting. Not only are potential developments limited to areas with strong winds, but additional factors, including the specific community, terrain, elevation, topographic funneling, and placement along migratory paths, are also important to site suitability (Layton n.d.:5; Pasqualetti 2011, 2004:1).

Marked by its simplicity, wind power harnesses the uneven absorption of solar radiation. The sun heats air, causing the air to rise, since warmer air is less dense. This creates a convection process, because cooler air then flows in to fill the ‘space’ left by the rising, hot air. This inrushing air is considered wind. The main components of the simplest wind turbines include the rotor blades, shaft, and the electric generator (see Appendix B). Both horizontal axis (the most common) and vertical axis turbines operate in the same manner. Essentially, wind turbines act as obstacles to wind; blades block wind and capture its kinetic energy. As wind forces the blades to move, the wind’s kinetic energy is transferred to the rotational kinetic energy of the rotor blades and connecting shaft. The rotating shaft then turns a generator shaft, converting the rotational kinetic energy into electrical energy. This, in turn, enters the electrical generator (Layton n.d.:1).
Significant differences exist between offshore and onshore wind turbines. With offshore farms, key requirements include moderate wave heights, relatively shallow water, and class 4 or 5 wind speeds. From a technological perspective, offshore winds are often stronger, less turbulent, and more consistent, which increases overall wind farm capacity. Although offshore wind farms consist of the same components as onshore farms, conditions at sea prove more demanding on their overall design and construction, and their operation and maintenance are dependent on weather conditions, so offshore farms are generally more time-consuming and costly (Chen and Blaabjerg 2009:1290-1292). Given that wind farms require a large amount of land, offshore wind can provide an alternative when facing land constraints. Additionally, offshore placement does not interfere with planned land uses, noise and aesthetic issues can be avoided, and creating roads is not an issue (Pasqualetti 2004:3). While many argue that offshore farms circumvent land-use issues, offshore wind farms may not avoid this controversy, particularly when examining reactions by the tourism or fishing industries.

Wind power provides numerous technical advantages over other forms of power. Yet, it is important to remember the incredibly site-specific nature of turbines when considering wind power. A significant benefit arises from wind power’s low environmental impact. Unlike other forms of energy, which may require mining or drilling, use vast quantities of water, or release pollutants and contribute to climate change, wind power bypasses these drawbacks. Widely

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24 Wind speeds (or classes) determine which turbines are suitable for the normal wind conditions at a particular site. They are determined by the average annual weed speed, the speed of extreme gusts that could occur over a 50-year period, and the level of wind turbulence. Wind speeds range from Class 1 (lowest) to Class 7 (highest). Generally, good wind resources are Class 4 or above. Class 4 or 5 wind speeds range from 12.5 mph to 14.3 mph (Vestas 2013).

25 While issues of competing land uses may not arise with offshore wind farms, issues surrounding competing access to water space are significant. Access to water space, alterations in navigable waterways, and competing uses (for instance with sport boats or commercial fishers) do surface. Gitxaala Nation expressed concerns with environmental impact, impact on migratory birds and sea life, and losing access to the area (EAA 2009; Rodman 2012).
viewed as a clean energy, wind power does not create emissions and is touted as reducing greenhouse gases. Any carbon emissions created during construction and installation are generally recuperated in less than six months. Wind power is also touted as a form of energy that any country can harness, leading to potential energy independence and security (Poumadère et al. 2011:717; Saidur et al. 2010:1745). Further strengthening its image, it requires no drilling, mining, water, or port facilities, and it produces no waste. In short, “wind power is relatively benign, simple, modular, affordable, and domestic…an environmental golden goose” (Pasqualetti 2004:2). Direct savings are also associated with wind power. Wind power requires relatively low amounts of research and expenditure compared to other energy technologies, such as wave power or fuel cells. Potentially benefiting consumers, wind power can protect the consumer from price hikes or supply shortages in the global fuel market. Savings associated with wind power may also include avoided fuel costs, capital costs, and environmental damage costs (Kennedy 2005:1661; Saidur et al. 2010:1745-1746). However, such avoided costs are difficult to quantify and may be specious.

Wind power suffers from a few glaring technical problems. The most significant problems associated with wind power are that the benefits are difficult to quantify and that wind power is a highly unreliable form of energy. Benefits associated with wind power remain obscure and the entire system must be examined; energy demand, storage capabilities, and the size of the energy grid must also be explored. A wind farm’s value is “not strictly intrinsic to the wind power technology itself, but rather to the system in which it operates” (Kennedy 2005:1661). Furthermore, constructing a wind farm does not necessarily lead to the displacement of other plants, for wind power must be utilized in conjunction with other forms of
energy. Finally, up-front costs with wind power, such as connecting to the grid and installation of the turbines, remain quite high (Munday 2011:5).

The additional problem of unreliability, both in terms of the nature of wind and in terms of the energy grid system, characterizes wind power. Winds do not blow constantly so power generation is not constant. However, electricity grids require reliable, ‘controllable’ energy in order to provide reliable and consistent power. Wind power’s unpredictable nature means that “wind contributes little towards meeting a grid’s reserve margin capacity requirements...[and to compensate] power providers must still build additionally capacity” (Hewson 2009:90). Thus, wind does not reduce energy usage of other plants and fails to displace the construction of new coal or gas plants. Rather, it simply represents additional capacity. Power plants operate at around 80 percent capacity because they utilize ‘controllable’ forms of energy that can be stored and harnessed when needed. Given the qualities of wind power, it cannot be used this way. Wind power is therefore often ‘harnessed’ with other forms of energy to provide a stable base-load, with coal or gas fulfilling this later function. Additionally, power from excess wind is wasted because the grid system cannot store this energy. If wind comprises a significant portion of the energy to a system, plants must run constantly to offset sudden changes (Ferguson and Pimentel 2008:136-39; Kennedy 2005:1662, 1674). This complicates matters, because plants will run less efficiently to utilize the wind. Storage also remains a problem: lack of suitable storage continues to plague utility operators, particularly with renewable energies such as wind, where output remains unpredictable (Lindley 2010:18). With wind power, an operating reserve is necessary. Uncontrollable forms of energy cannot be stored in an efficient manner. Storage must be cost-effective and simultaneously “robust, reliable and economically competitive – while matching the most suitable technology to each energy source or location” (Lindley
Given the extreme unpredictability of wind, wind would need to be stored months in certain locations. Various methods of storage are being explored (Ferguson and Pimentel 2008:141-142). Such methods include sodium-sulphur batteries and lithium-ion batteries, but options currently suffer from high operational costs (Lindley 2010:19). Given these constraints, wind has severely limited capacity.

Critics to wind development argue that wind power relies on fossil fuels for the construction and installation of wind turbines (specifically for roads and transmission lines). Additionally, wind projects may suffer from siting issues, for specific wind farms may be sited on sensitive lands, such as deserts or coastlines (Ferguson and Pimentel 2008:133; Pasqualetti 2004:3). Turbines also pose a threat to wildlife, specifically birds, bats, and sea life. Yet, the risks confronting wildlife remain difficult to quantify, given the site-specific nature of wind and the fact that birds fly at species-specific altitudes. Reports document that significant numbers of raptors, smaller birds, and bats have been killed (but these are mainly at older turbines or in migratory routes) (Ferguson and Pimentel 2008:150). The potential threats posed to wildlife can be mitigated: modern turbines are higher and therefore less likely to harm birds, blade rotation is slower, and proper placement and grouping can limit bird endangerment (Krijgsfeld et al. 2009:357-358).

Canada’s installed wind capacity has grown significantly, expanding from 200 MW in 2001 to its current 6,568 MW (CanWEA n.d.). As of 2012, Canada ranked ninth in the world in wind generating capacity, with Ontario leading the provinces at roughly 2,000 MW installed capacity (Dauncey 2012). British Columbia currently lags behind other provinces, with roughly 390 MW of installed capacity. BC became the last province to erect a utility-scale (contribution
to the electricity grid) wind energy project (Bear Mountain) and ranks behind Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta in installed capacity (CanWEA n.d.). Bear Mountain (102 MW from 34 turbines), Dokie Ridge (144 MW from 48 turbines), Tumbler Ridge (142 MW from 79 turbines) and Grouse Mountain’s Eye of the Wind (1.5 MW from 1 turbine) are the presently operating wind farms in BC (Dauncey 2012). Six additional projects are under development in BC and scheduled for completion by 2014 (CanWEA n.d.).

E. Methodology

This research was based in Prince Rupert, BC, from May-August 2012.26 As Menzies notes, research and writing by non-Aboriginal researchers can offer meaningful contributions “if researchers change their approach so that it becomes part of a process of decolonization” (2001:21). Shaped in collaboration with Gitxaala Nation, this research attempted to adhere to ideas of research “with, for, and among indigenous peoples” (Menzies 2001). A respectful research relationship was sought, recognizing the transactions of power involved and the position of the researcher as linked with the history of research, Aboriginal peoples, and processes of colonization and imperialism (Lassiter 2005; Menzies 2001; Smith 1999). Among steps taken to acknowledge and address these imbalances, the research evolved to include Gitxaala interests (discussed below) and was formed in conjunction with Gitxaala Environmental Monitoring.

26 Although most fieldwork was conducted in Prince Rupert, BC, the town is located approximately 30 miles from Lach Klan. Lach Klan can be reached from Prince Rupert by a 2-hour boat ride, a 20-minute float plane ride, or a 1½ hour weekly ferry. According to the 2011 census, Prince Rupert maintains a population of 12,508 (Statistics Canada 2012). Witnessing a steady decline in its population, Prince Rupert’s population dropped 12.5 percent between 2001-2006 and an additional 2.4 percent from 2006-2011 (Statistics Canada 2010). Within Prince Rupert, the total Aboriginal population was 4,660 as of 2006 (Statistics Canada 2010). Industry in Prince Rupert includes fishing, tourism, and port facilities, although forestry, pulp mills, and canning facilities once played a larger role.
(GEM), an agency of Gitxaala Nation. I also sought to remain in contact with research participants and the community throughout the process. And finally, research findings will be presented to the community. While steps were taken to conduct research incorporating Gitxaala’s interests, the subjective nature of research bears mentioning; selection of who is spoken to, what is written, and the types of conclusions drawn are always non-random (Wolf 2001:52-54). Issues of access, personal perceptions, and my positions as a graduate student and researcher unavoidably shaped my vantage point.

Integral in shaping a collaborative research relationship with Gitxaala Nation, Charles Menzies assisted in countless ways to cultivate a positive research relationship. As noted elsewhere (Menzies 2004; Menzies forthcoming), community members of Gitxaala skeptically view research attempts in their community. Little has been published about Gitxaala.27 Thus, an established research relationship proved integral. Charles Menzies facilitated an internship with Gitxaala Environmental Monitoring (GEM), a Gitxaala organization that addresses projects pertaining to Gitxaala First Nation (such as development projects, BC and Canadian Environmental Assessments, and issues related to environmental or cultural resources). The arrangement with GEM proved immensely important by providing research contacts, assisting in the development of research questions, and offering guidance and feedback throughout the project. Through GEM’s direction, the project was situated within Gitxaala Nation’s broader

27 Gitxaala has historically been reserved when sharing their knowledge. Anthropological literature frequently notes this. Menzies states that there exists a “dearth of academic research that specifically addresses Gitxaala as a subject of study separate from other Tsimshianic communities” (Forthcoming). Prior to research conducted by Charles Menzies and Caroline Butler, very little research was undertaken with Gitxaala. Although slightly more has been published regarding Tsimshians more broadly, this is still relatively limited. Most 20th century ethnographers exploring Tsimshians worked either with William Beynon or from his extensive field notes and manuscripts, making him a key figure in Tsimshian research. Maurice Barbeau, Franz Boas, and Viola Garfield all drew from his research (see Menzies forthcoming for further discussion). More recently, Jay Miller (2000) and Marjorie Halpin and Margaret Seguin (1990) also worked with the coastal Tsimshian.
directives, and the specific goals of the research project evolved as factors and priorities deemed important to Gitxaala Nation regarding wind turbine development surfaced.

Entering fieldwork, the research asked:

1. What factors shape how wind turbine development is perceived (and thus accepted or rejected)?
   a. What (if any) benefits/concerns are expected from wind turbine development in Gitxaala?

2. What are the underlying assumptions informing the notion that green energy projects are positive (and desired) for First Nations?

3. Are renewables (and wind power) desired by First Nations?
   a. Are renewable energy projects viewed differently than other energy projects? If so, what factors contribute to this view?

However, these questions were altered based on Gitxaala Nation and GEM interests.

Additionally, my experiences trying to understand BC’s renewable energy landscape spurred a reformulation of research questions. While the main questions of the research stayed the same, refined research questions emerged. Updated research questions included:

1. What factors shape how wind turbine development is perceived (and thus accepted or rejected)?
   a. What (if any) benefits (concerns) are expected from wind turbine development in Gitxaala?

2. Are renewables (and wind power) desired by Gitxaala Nation?
   a. Are renewable energy projects viewed differently than other energy projects? If so, what factors contribute to this view?

3. What steps are required for a First Nation in BC to start a renewable energy project?

I realized that the initial questions entering fieldwork regarding assumptions informing the notion that green energy projects are positive (and desired) for First Nations were less relevant,
as such terms held little weight for members in Gitxaala (see Section 3: What’s Green About Renewable Energies?). However, Gitxaala is actively pursuing their own wind turbine joint-venture project, so investigating the necessary steps involved proved pertinent. My attempts to answer these questions, and the difficulties experienced, factored heavily in this research. In a sense, investigating the process of starting a renewable energy project in BC was an attempt to “turn the gaze around” and focus the research on institutions and networks informing renewable energy development (Menzies n.d.:3).

Ethnographic research methods were employed, including participant observation and semi-structured interviews, with countless informal conversations, observations, and daily experiences playing an important role. Participant observation occurred primarily at the GEM office, during the NEB hearings and the food-harvesting trip, and while I carried out my daily activities in Prince Rupert. Participant observation allowed me to observe how organizations and community members discussed and thus conceptualized wind turbine development and renewable energies. A total of twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted. This interview format was employed since answers were not amenable to yes/no responses and instead focused on breadth of perspectives. These interviews hoped to capture the range of factors informing views on turbine development while granting participants freedom to discuss any relevant issues. This method assisted in uncovering factors informing the issue (such as power relations, previous development projects, sovereignty, etc.). Community members also answered questions tied to benefits and concerns regarding wind turbine development. Explored themes included environmental and economic concerns, perceived benefits of the project and renewable energy, and what an ideal development scenario might be, if one were possible.
Those interviewed were chosen based on a variety of factors, with access playing an important role. Among interviewees, attempts were made to speak with community members who had a stake in the issue of wind turbine development and renewable energy projects, and development in general. Locally active environmental non-profits, representatives of Gitxaala’s environmental monitoring group, members of the Prince Rupert community, members of Gitxaala First Nation (including one band council member and hereditary leaders), and the companies involved in development were interviewed. What was raised in these interviews was verified through participant observation, informal chats with a wide variety of Gitxaala members, and articulations at the NEB hearings.

This research does not offer a representative sample of perspectives related to wind turbine development, nor would it have been feasible given the limited time for fieldwork. Rather, it offers a non-generalizable glimpse into how wind turbine projects in this context are viewed by those who have some responsibility and stake in the development of the project. The strengths of this research method “come from understanding how and why, not understanding how many” (Small forthcoming:8). While this research is not representative, in this social context, those with some responsibility (to the First Nation, to Gitxaala Territory, to the community, to the outcome of the project, etc.) were interviewed in the hopes of offering insights into how the wind turbine projects are understood and conceived within the community. Eric Wolf acknowledges the non-random nature in selecting who is spoken to and the conclusions drawn, noting that a truly “random” sample cannot exist (2001). It also bears mentioning that “random” sampling may not offer better insights than non-random selection strategies; chain interviewing can lead to higher response rates and more finely tuned research questions and interviews (Small forthcoming:3-4).
Initial contacts were made through my research supervisor and through GEM. Following this, chain interviewing occurred to identify potential contacts. Drawing from Eric Wolf’s analysis of society as “a system formed by clusters and networks of people organized around flows of resources in space and time,” contacts were sought based on their pivotal positions and expertise (2001:56). People interviewed included individuals employed at GEM, employees of Prince Rupert’s environmental non-profits (World Wildlife Fund Canada, Ecotrust Canada, and T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation), members of Gitxaala First Nation, an employee of Naikun Wind Energy, Inc. (the wind developer who could be reached), and Shauna McRanor, a First Nation’s Consultation Specialist with Golder Associates, Ltd. (interviewed particularly for her experience with BC Hydro-First Nation relations). Most interviews took place in person, at GEM, local coffee shops, or at the participants’ houses. Two phone interviews were conducted.

Interviews were supplemented with innumerable conversations with community residents and email exchanges with various renewable energy companies and with Prince Rupert’s economic development officer. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Participants’ responses were analyzed to discern trends, commonalities and differences, and to

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28 While Golder Associates is one of numerous environmental consulting firms (including but not limited to Amec, Stantech, and Rescan), it is one of the leading firms in the region. Golder Associates was selected for an interview for two key reasons. The company previously worked with North Coast Wind Energy in 2008 on the Banks Island North Wind Energy Project, preparing key documents for the Environmental Assessment application, providing permitting services, and assisting in public consultation and First Nation consultation. Additionally, due to issues of access, Golder Associates emerged as an appropriate contact. As agents who are appointed by companies (and are often outsiders to these communities), they work to negotiate land and resource deals with local communities. Hence, there are clear “complexities of allegiance, accountability and entanglements in local politics involved in these relationships” (Fairhead et al. 2012:250). As such, information gleaned from interviews is partial and reflects McRanor’s unique position, allegiances, and stance as an actor whose firm benefits from negotiating deals.

29 All interviews were conducted in confidentiality. The names of some interviewees were withheld by mutual agreement. To protect the privacy of interview participants and those involved, names (and identifying features) of some individuals have been changed. In such cases, pseudonyms are employed and noted as such. Those who desired to have their names associated with their interview have been left unchanged. Given the nature of their work, the names of public figures and professionals interviewed, if they desired, are left unchanged.
explore how various actors conceptualized wind turbine development (themes included development, wind farms, territory, Enbridge, trust, benefits, etc.). Interviews were analyzed and compared to literature surrounding responses to wind farms, drawing on theories of social acceptance, cultural identity and place, and literature regarding renewable energy projects and issues of trust, equity, and engagement.

Interviews with members of Gitxaała First Nation proved difficult, in part due to my location in Prince Rupert rather than Lach Klan. However, participating in a food-harvesting trip gave me the opportunity to make key connections. Most interviews apart from the fishing trip were conducted with members of Gitxaała First Nation living in Prince Rupert. In no way does this research claim to represent a uniform ‘Gitxaała perspective;’ there necessarily cannot be a unified perspective given internal hierarchies, varying sets of interests and stakes in the issue, and the lack of homogeneity within any community. To provide a broader perspective, efforts were made to speak to various Gitxaała members, including hereditary leaders (who are responsible both for and to their houses), an elected member of the Band Council (who spoke with the authority of the entire Band Council), those within and outside of GEM, those involved in the boat trip, and Gitxaała members living in Prince Rupert. Multiple attempts were made to contact all companies with proposed wind turbine projects in the region, the elected council in Prince Rupert, representatives of BC Hydro, and Clean Energy B.C. (the industry trade association which represents clean energy project developers). While most attempts were largely fruitless, BC Hydro did respond and offer some valuable insights. The overall lack of accessibility of these various organizations proved telling and is discussed in depth in Section 4.
SECTION 3: WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT ON THE NORTH COAST

A. Introduction

   Renewable energy technologies have arisen as one of the key mechanisms for combating climate change. Touted for their low environmental impact and ability to contribute to energy demands, renewable energies figure prominently in climate change discussions (Stern 2007). Among renewable energies, wind represents the fastest growing energy resource in the world (Poumadère et. al 2011). In British Columbia, an increasing number of wind turbine projects are proposed to meet the province’s 2016 goal of energy self-sufficiency (Province of B.C. 2011b). Furthermore, renewable energy projects in partnership with First Nations are on the rise throughout Canada. In examining renewable energy partnerships with First Nations, a narrative of renewables as providing social, political, and economic development opportunities often arises in the literature (Dreveskracht 2011; Krupa 2012a). Renewable energy projects are often articulated as an alternative to other forms of energy development and are valued in comparison to these projects, and the notion that renewable energy projects are more appealing than other energy development (such as oil or coal mining) often arises. As Haggett and Futák-Campbell observe, what “developers and supporters of wind farms use in their rationale is that renewable energy is obviously a good thing; it is clean, green, endless energy” (2011:212). On a broad level, renewable energy or green projects begin from the contention that renewable energies are net goods, both for the community and for combatting climate change (Barry et al. 2008; Haggett and Futák-Campbell 2011). However, on the local-scale, this is not necessarily the case.

   Wind projects unfold in particular ways, with local specificity and histories affecting the underlying logic of renewable energy development. Project proponents and industry purport that wind projects offer opportunities, alternatives, and unique pathways for development (discussed
in *Section 3 C*). In the case of wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory, renewable energy development does not arise as a form of development somehow *different or unique* from previous development. Rather, renewable energies are viewed in light of a history of development in the region and are understood as part of a larger infrastructure of energy development. At this particular moment, wind turbine projects are seen merely as another form of development and are not recognized as better because they are ‘green’ or ‘renewable’ projects. They are inextricably linked with other development projects, such as the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline (NGP), a proposed pipeline to export bitumen from Alberta to Kitimat, BC, where it would then be shipped by oil tankers to Asian markets (Enbridge 2012a) (See Fig. 2).

This section first explores how members of Gitxaala Nation do not conceptualize wind turbine development as a ‘green’ or ‘renewable’ energy. It then examines how wind development materializes as a continuation of development in the region by investigating how current wind projects are associated with industry. More specifically, an exploration of how wind development is linked with the NGP emerges. Finally, these understandings of wind development are juxtaposed with how governments, project proponents, and environmental non-profits in the region discuss and market renewable energies in terms of opportunities, alternatives, and advancement of a renewable energy industry.

**B. What’s Green about Renewables Energies? Renewables as a Non-Existent Category**

Renewable energies are unique “configurations of the social and technical…which mirror wider social, economic and technical relations and processes” (Walker and Cass 2007: 459). As defined by the United Nations and the European Commission, renewable energies
include “wind, solar, geothermal, wave, tidal, hydropower, biomass, landfill gas, sewage
treatment plant gas, and biogases” (Gritsevskyi n.d.). BC Hydro classifies green energy as
“energy generated from renewable resources through licensable and environmentally and
socially responsible developments” (BC Hydro 2002:10). The term ‘renewable energy’ itself is
problematic, varying greatly and having vastly different technical definitions compared to
popular understandings (Devine-Wright n.d.:2-3). While certain renewables are more generally
recognizable (such as solar or wind), other renewable energies (such as biomass) are not
perceived as renewable (Devine-Wright 2003; DTI 2003). Thus, how people think about
renewable energy diverges from official definitions.

What one considers ‘green’ or ‘renewable’ energy may vary considerably. Scholars note
the ubiquity of ‘green knowledge,’ with such knowledge often “cut off from the cultural
dimension” (Hajer and Fischer 6:1999). Even among countries, notions of ‘green’ vary
considerably; various nations mobilize cultural traditions in the making of different “national
shades of green” (Jamison 2001:121). Furthermore, among (and within) communities,
understandings of ‘green’ may diverge. Cultural sensibilities cannot be overlooked when
contemplating ‘green’ energy. Yet, such a ‘green perspective’ often “neglects the importance of
cultural context” and reduces complexity (Torgerson 1999:186). When considering ‘green
knowledge’ in relation to Aboriginal communities, Torgerson finds that vague, general

30 BC Hydro states that “Detailed green criteria can be accessed through BC Hydro’s website
www.bchydro.com/greenipp” (BC Hydro 2002:10). However, BC Hydro’s link failed to work on multiple attempts.
31 For Hajer and Fischer, culture is “the implicit systems of meaning and frames of reference that underpin
the various institutional practices through which we conduct environmental politics” (1999:6). They introduce culture to
underscore particularities in the way societies relate to their environment and to explore how social order is
implicated and utilized in approaches to environmental policy.
32 In Jamison’s The Making of Green Knowledge (2001), he asserts that nations have national ‘shades’ of green. He
argues that Sweden seeks to become a model to follow, that the revival of Denmark’s populist heritage regarding
green knowledge is a response to constraints produced by the project of European integration, and that the United
States’ commercial environmentalism draws from the nation’s historic battle between exploitation and preservation
references (such as green) may in fact “block understanding by translating everything back into the terms of outsiders” (1999:193-194), a key concept which arose during my time in Gitxaala.

For those members of Gitxaala Nation who were interviewed, the idea of renewable or green energy simply did not exist. Aside from Band Council members directly involved in pursuing wind projects and Gitxaala members working at GEM, the category of green energy was not significant. It is important to explore this finding, as the non-existence of renewable energy as a category of energy project in Gitxaala underscores discrepancies between discourse and marketing surrounding renewable energy projects and their reception in local communities. Governments and project proponents actively encourage such projects and do so from a vantage point outside the indigenous communities in which projects are situated, ignoring local articulations and understandings (discussed below). Not only are local articulations ignored, but employing terms from an outside perspective works to block meaningful discussion by further imposing a framework and positionality with links to a colonial past (for example). As Nadasdy argues, continuing to evaluate ideas (such as green) according to Euro-American ideals is inherently rooted in an imperialist perspective (2005:239). The fact that members of Gitxaala interviewed do not conceptualize renewable or green energy in the same manner as industry and government further highlights why wind turbine development is not perceived as a positive alternative but rather a continuation of existing development patterns and practices in the region.

Notions of green and renewable energy were foreign to most interview participants. During interviews with members of Gitxaala Nation, participants were asked to describe what renewable energy meant to them. They responded in various ways. Most noted that I asked “good questions” but they did not have an answer. When asked whether renewable energy
projects were somehow different than other energy development projects, participants voiced confusion. Responses extended from “What’s that?” to “Now I got lost” to “I don’t really know how to answer that” to “That is a really tough question” (Interviews July and August 2012). Renewable energy projects were evaluated in the same terms as other projects. Factors considered important to participants did not relate to renewable energy development per se, but rather to ideas of community benefits, job creation, community ownership, effects to the environment and traditional practices, and impacts to access and harvesting grounds. Yet, underlying many of these conversations is an imposition of a particular model of understanding. In exploring ‘green energy,’ I realized that my questions imposed an inappropriate model of understanding that held little weight in Gitxaala (see Irwin and Wynne 1996:9). Furthermore, “I don’t know” responses to renewable energy actually offered rich information when understood as responses reflecting unique insights, as discussed below (see Wynne 1996:41 for further discussion).

When pressed on the issue of green energy, some participants responded that green energy might be better when presented with two identical projects (one of which was a renewable energy and one of which was not). Lorne Gladstone, a 50-year-old fisherman and member of the Ganhada Clan (Raven) of Gitxaala Nation, stated that “maybe green [are better]…Well, I think it’s more about jobs” (Interview July 7, 2012). In this case, although a renewable project might be more desirable than a non-renewable project, other factors carry greater weight. By ranking jobs (for example) as a factor by which a project’s desirability is measured, renewable energy projects are instead evaluated not on a distinction between renewable/non-renewable but rather on their ability to produce community benefits. Members of Gitxaala Nation with whom I spoke noted how projects would be more successful if developed
by the community or if they were joint-venture projects. Given that a majority of the conversations revolved around benefits, it became clear that projects were understood in terms of community benefit. Rather than understanding the project as renewable versus non-renewable, projects were seen as projects, regardless of their type, where the main concerns related to how they would affect Gitxaala Nation.

Notions of what constitutes a renewable energy in Gitxaala diverge from definitions of renewable energy as classified by the United Nations and European Commission. Without realizing it, many interviewees offered definitions of renewable energy but simultaneously affirmed they knew nothing of renewable energies. When asked what comes to mind when he thinks of green energy, Greg McKay, a member of Gitxaala Nation and employee of GEM, mused, “Green energy, clean energy. Yeah. I guess at the beginning of this process [wind turbine development], it wouldn’t actually be clean energy to begin with because of the amount of oil and production it would cost to-and fuel-to get the whole thing in place, installed” (Interview July 24, 2012). In contemplating clean energy, McKay considered the amount of oil employed in construction and production and compares it to the life cycle of the project. Here, the polluting nature of the project, as well as its ability to impact the environment, is contemplated. Impressions of wind turbines interwove with oil production. Notions of destruction, environmental damage, and use (or disuse) of oil, are considered. By discussing clean energy in relation to the overall life cycle of a project, McKay possesses a quite nuanced understanding of energy infrastructure. McKay examines various aspects of the energy (including which energies feed into it) and he explores multiple phases of the project. In doing so, McKay evaluates clean energy (as well as the project) in a manner similar to many interview participants; he views the larger, more comprehensive picture. Thus, his astute understanding of clean energy outlines a
‘green’ energy that incorporates both a broader picture of renewable energy projects (by incorporating a time dimension and a project lifecycle) and a larger energy infrastructure with linkages to oil.

Differing types of renewable energies are not treated similarly by interviewees and are instead evaluated (and ranked) by their environmental impact. Hydropower, an energy classified as renewable, is not thought of as a renewable energy (according to those who had some knowledge of renewable energies). Instead, hydropower is conceptualized largely in terms of its destruction and impact on fish, fishing grounds, environment, and cultural resources. McKay illustrates this point in his discussion of hydropower. When asked about the role renewables could play in the community of Gitxaala, he offers:

“It’s like exploring new grounds…The difference from that to I guess building a dam – because a dam would basically flood a valley or such – or using power from a strong stream [is] that it would cover more, probably more area than a windmill would. And plus, I’m thinking because our culture and traditions relied on, or still do rely on, fish, that these dams have changed the returns of salmon also (Interview July 24, 2012).

Wind turbines are compared to hydropower without prompting. Moreover, the destructive aspects of each technology surfaces in his analysis. This type of comparison arises frequently. Bobby Dover, a Gitxaala Nation member and hereditary leader, when asked if it matters whether a project is renewable (which was rephrased to clean energy after he said he did not know about renewable energy), responds, “Yeah, well, I think it will be because it’s not like those big dams they built…You know, it’s not like building dams or anything” (Interview August 9, 2012). Before exploring the significance of the notion of clean energy, Dover’s

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33 As has been explored extensively, such hydroelectric projects continue to have significant social and environmental impacts on Aboriginal peoples, ranging from displacement, loss of culture and sense of place, disruption of fragile ecosystems and rising mercury levels in fish, and impacts to traditional activities (Hornig 1999; Hume 1992; Windsor and McVey 2005).

34 A pseudonym.
remarks prove illuminating regarding the conceptualization of renewable energies. Although previously stating that he “did not really know” about renewable energy, he compares wind turbine development to hydropower, finding turbines less destructive.

Not only did understandings of renewable energy fail to align with official definitions of renewable energy, but various energies (all classified as renewable) were ranked in accordance with their destructive nature and impacts on the environment, highlighting the degree to which renewable energy projects are evaluated in the same manner as various development projects, where key factors are impact to the environment, destruction, and job creation. By viewing renewable energy projects as an extension of other development projects, Gitxaala astutely see wind turbine development as part of a larger energy infrastructure directly tied to oil development and past experiences with hydropower.

Some interview participants did engage more strongly with the concept of renewable energy as a community resource, particularly those working at GEM. One Band Council member interviewed was acutely aware of renewable energy and the role it could play in Gitxaala Nation’s future, particularly since Gitxaala is actively pursuing a joint-venture wind project (Rodman 2012). During one interview with hereditary leader and Band Council member Raymond Ferris, Ferris discussed green energy before I mentioned it (an unusual occurrence), stating:

I think, right now, it’s more interest in wind power. I mean, we haven’t really explored any other green energy. I mean, we have an endless supply of wind in our area...From what we see, yes, there may be some impacts, but you have to weigh those...We’re not against development or anything, as long as it’s sustainable, safe (Interview August 13, 2012).

35 A pseudonym.
This reflects both an understanding of the emergence of green energy and an interest in pursuing the opportunity of wind energy, and in particular, the role it could play in securing economic, social, and political advantages. Furthermore, it also reflects a heightened awareness of the potential impacts and disruptions renewable energy development may cause.

Ferris comments on this, stating, “You need to think of our own healthcare system, our own housing situation, infrastructure in our community, and even our people, and if this were to materialize to where they say it can, that can all happen. You start to take care of your people and not rely on government funds” (Interview August 13, 2012). The idea that renewable energy projects can provide long-term benefits surfaces. Although Ferris notes benefits of renewable energy development, he comments on the broader community benefits (benefits associated with renewables and non-renewables alike, rather than specific environmental benefits associated with renewable energy), thus indicating a conceptualization of wind turbine development as similar to other development projects with potential to benefit Gitxaala.

While renewable energies do not arise as separate categories when considering development projects, it does not mean that members of Gitxaala do not engage with climate change. In fact, numerous elders and harvesters commented on climate change, discussing changing tides, shifting bird populations, and changing seasonal cycles, marked by the earlier arrival of seaweed season and warmer winters (Rodman 2012). Butler and Menzies also find a similar pattern in the herring roe fishery and discuss how the “length of the season for picking tidal resources has shortened, with cockles and clams spawning earlier…[and] most species harvested from the shore on low tide have declined in abundance” (2007:24). Although aware of
climate and seasonal changes, observations of climate change do not necessarily correlate to interest in renewable energy technologies over other energy projects.

Renewable energies do not exist as a distinct category of energy development projects. In fact, categories of ‘green’ or ‘renewable’ impose an inappropriate model of understanding in this context. An absence of ‘green’ as a category does not mean that it serves no role but rather that it fits within other “locally validated knowledges” (Wynne 1996:20). While many participants state that they “do not know” about renewable energy, they simultaneously evaluate renewable energies, rank them, and explore renewable energy through an analysis of the overall life cycles of projects and an evaluation of the ways in which different energies feed into one another.

Projects are simply conceptualized as industry. Development as a category subsumes all distinctions. Members of Gitxaala with whom I spoke do not distinguish strongly between renewable versus non-renewable. Renewable energies are evaluated similarly to other projects, where impacts to the environment, culture, and community benefits are some of the factors which determine project suitability and acceptance. Using this reasoning, the environmentally destructive nature of wind energy is highlighted, as evinced by comparisons between wind and dams and discussions of hydropower’s destructive nature. Hence, renewable energy projects appear remarkably similar to non-renewable projects and seem to be evaluated in the same terms as other development projects. By analyzing the life cycles of projects and evaluating the ways in which different energies feed into one another, Gitxaala establishes a more comprehensive view of energy projects in the region and how various projects connect. Their understanding is more extensive than ‘green’ energy. When renewable energy as a category and distinct type of
project does not exist, it becomes easier to see why wind turbine development in Gitxaała does not appear as distinct and separate from developments such as Enbridge’s proposed NGP.

C. Wind Turbines as Industrial Development

Associations with Industry

Renewable energy, including wind power, is not divorced from broader ideas of industry in Gitxaała Nation. In fact, development of wind turbine projects was rarely viewed in terms of the specific project (partially due to the fact that the projects are in early stages and little is known about specifics) but rather understood on a much larger scale, the industrial level. Gitxaała shrewdly viewed wind turbine development as part of the larger energy infrastructure in the region – one with ties to oil sand development – and as one component in an ongoing pattern of projects impacting their community. Yet renewable energies are often framed as offering alternative pathways for indigenous communities to develop (Krupa 2012a; Powell 2006). Such renewable energy development “poses an opportunity for new directions in developing sustainable economies, livelihoods, and tribal sovereignty in many locales, with yet undetermined pathways, alliances, and outcomes” (Powell and Long 2010:234).

Additionally, renewable energies are often portrayed in the media as aligning with First Nation values (Aboriginal Human Resource Council 2010). A disjuncture arises when considering renewable energy development as offering new pathways and opportunities and

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36 See Grossman (2008) for a discussion of how renewable energy technologies can offer new opportunities for alliances between indigenous and nontribal governments, grassroots organizations, and various actors. Dana Powell (2006) explores how renewable energy projects serve as new modes for economic, ecological, and cultural development. Powell finds that these emerging technologies “not only resist but also propose alternatives to the dominant models of energy production in the US” (2006:125).
when exploring renewable energy development in specific localities. In understanding renewable energy development as emblematic of ongoing development in the region, wind turbine projects in Gitxaala emerge as an *extension* of a history of development, not as an alternative pathway. By exploring how wind energy materializes as an industry and by examining how Gitxaala’s past experiences influence current conceptualizations of the project, wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory emerges as inextricably linked with the broader process of industrial resource extraction on the North Coast.

To understand why wind turbine development might be associated with industrial-scale projects, Gitxaala’s historic experiences with development in the North Coast region must be explored. In doing so, one can begin to grasp the resource extraction projects overwhelming the region. Only in beginning to understand the history and level of industrial resource extraction in the region does it become clear why renewable energy might be aligned with such projects, rather than as an intrinsically different energy project. Industrial development emerges as symbolic of a history of exploitation and injustice experienced by Gitxaala Nation. McKay discusses resource extraction in the region, illustrating how renewable energy development is understood within a web of resource extraction, energy, and development in the region. When asked how he feels about Gitxaala Territory, McKay states:

> I think we’ve been under attack for years. Whether it be forestry, fishery, Transport Canada, now it’s oil tankers and the pipeline. That’s the big thing. And now that we have Kitimat also… they [Haisla First Nation] got their LNG [liquefied natural gas] going up now, which would create more and more transportation of tankers… And even though it’s not directly in our territory, they’re still our neighbors and basically what they do in their yard basically affects us too…I don’t know, it’s like they gave away everything that we ever had all our lives living here on the coast (Interview July 24, 2012).
Economic marginalization, political repression, and legacies of the disproportionate impact of development all color the lens through which wind turbine development is seen. Past experiences with corporations, government, development, and consultation figure prominently in how renewable energy projects are viewed. As McKay’s statement depicts, Gitxaala continue to experience relentless waves of attacks, from forestry, fishing, and mining to newer projects such as port development, liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities, oil development, and now renewable energy projects. Rooted in these experiences, the logic behind renewable energy development’s association with a history of extractive industries proves telling. Renewable energy materializes as part of a larger infrastructure impacting Gitxaala in particular ways. Most members of Gitxaala Nation interviewed expressed similar sentiments, recollecting a history of loss, failed promises, and restrictive government policies. As recollected by Gitxaala Nation member Ken Innes (Ganhada, Raven clan), over the last few years, “all we’ve been doing is fighting” (Interview August 3, 2012). The rising wave of wind development cannot be unwoven from Gitxaala’s past.

Given this history, renewable energy development parallels past and ongoing experiences. Renewable energies are understood as one wave of development and conceptualized on the industry level, as revealed in the statements of most members of Gitxaala Nation whom I interviewed. This is perhaps most clearly seen in how members of Gitxaala Nation express their experiences in interacting with industry and previous projects. Innes asserts that companies are “making us believe it’s clean energy but really someone is reaping the benefits” (Interview August 3, 2012). Innes’ statement reflects a view of industry that is particularly illuminating. Not only is renewable energy seen as part of the continuum of development, but it materializes as a form of development whereby people are “tricked” by
companies into thinking renewable energy differs. Furthermore, Innes’ claim that “someone is reaping the benefits” echoes McKay’s statement that “they gave away everything that we ever had all our lives living here on the coast” (Interviews August 3, 2012 and July 24, 2012). In both cases, a particular history of economic marginalization and impacts emerges, with wind turbine development viewed skeptically and aligned with past experiences, experiences which did not necessarily serve Gitxaala Nation well. Thus, renewable energy projects are emblematic of past failures and ruptures, with legacies of colonial pasts continuing to linger and “shape the positionality of both colonizers and the colonized” (Willow 2009:37).

In addition to the association of renewable energy projects with industry, experiences with the engagement process and consultation figure prominently in conversations surrounding wind turbine development. Experiences interacting with industry surface in discussions concerning wind turbines. By considering renewable energy in terms of past development experiences, renewables are viewed through a lens shaded by development and industry. Both leadership and members of Gitxaala Nation interviewed recount histories of exclusion. McKay elaborates:

When I grew up back home there, we’d always hear and see barges and barges of trees going by and basically none of that process was brought to our community’s attention that we could’ve been a part of that or benefit from the, I guess the destruction of our land. It was pretty hard knowing that other communities or companies were taking from our territory and not really compensating our community (Interview July 24, 2012).

Citing a lack of involvement and lack of community benefits from the “destruction of our land,” McKay highlights the difficulties in knowing companies were “taking from our territory and not really compensating our community.” Similar sentiments materialize in discussions regarding wind proponents approaching Gitxaala Nation, underscoring how companies interact with
Gitxaala. Both renewable and non-renewable companies follow a similar pattern, attempting to push projects forward without regard to Gitxaala’s rights. This pattern of behavior by project proponents reinforces that renewable energy development would be viewed by Gitxaala as an extension of previous experiences. When asked to discuss wind turbine projects in Gitxaala Territory, Band Council member and hereditary leader Raymond Ferris\textsuperscript{37} outlined how wind companies approached Gitxaala Nation:

I remember Katabatic. Now it’s North Coast Wind Energy now. There was something else before that. But, Tony was the key guy that first came into the community saying that he was there to save us…They didn’t involve Gitxaala in the EA process, especially the leadership. They tried to go around leadership and just approach individuals in the community….Gitxaala wasn’t consulted properly. We never really had our input in that assessment….When the industry comes to our community and talks to us individually it’s easier for them to get around and we don’t fully understand what’s been put in front of us (Interview August 13, 2012).

This statement reveals a particular history of exclusion and lack of consultation and protocol, with renewable energy companies treating Gitxaala Nation in the same manner as past industry. In this indicative example, Ferris simply calls wind companies “the industry” and moves from highlighting how Katabatic approached Gitxaala to a broader discussion of how industry interacts with Gitxaala, categorizing renewable energy development as an extension of industry. Ferris also asserts that “I really believe they were trying to roll right over us and just not involve us, minimize our involvement,” drawing upon experiences with companies approaching their community (Interview August 13, 2012). He further comments on how Gitxaala still does not have access to the wind data collected in their territory, which varying companies currently own.\textsuperscript{38} Most members interviewed reiterated Ferris’ statements. However, it should be noted

\textsuperscript{37} A pseudonym.

\textsuperscript{38} The only publicly available wind data (available on BC Hydro’s website) includes readings from the Mount Hays site. The government directed BC Hydro to turn over much of its early research (from the 1980s onward) on wind,
that as a member of the Band Council, Ferris has a particular position regarding companies approaching Gitxaala. Yet, most non-Band Council members also express the same sentiments.

Furthermore, the lack of voice in consultation and development processes arises as a dominant theme. As discussed above, the Band Council member with whom I spoke recounted a history of attempts by government and industry to steamroll Gitxaala’s input and silence their voice in the consultation process, a process informing why renewable energy development is viewed skeptically. Members of Gitxaala Nation interviewed echo concerns over lack of inclusion. When asked whether he feels if he has a say in what happens in his community, Lorne Gladstone, a member of Gitxaala Nation (Ganhada, Raven clan) living in Prince Rupert, declares, “Well, if somebody from the outside comes in to do something, they have their say about it, but will the person on the outside be listening? There at Enbridge, they’re not listening. They’re going through with it anyway. They’re not listening. They’re still working on the pipeline. Even though they had that spill in Alberta” (Interview July 7, 2012). Another Gitxaala member and hereditary chief, William Cummings, states the same worries in response to Enbridge, noting that “No matter what we say and what we do, they’re still going to go ahead” (Interview August 2, 2012). Both instances reflect a belief that companies refuse to listen to Gitxaala’s concerns, and both interview participants express these concerns associated with Enbridge without prompting. As discussed in the following section, renewable energy’s association with Enbridge further highlights the degree to which renewable energy development is understood as yet another development endeavor in the region, rather than as a distinctly

which includes potential sites and wind readings, to private power developers (Calvert 2007:139). Private power developers often claim ‘proprietary ownership’ of data, as has been the case with Gitxaala’s attempts to gain access to this data (Rodman 2012).

39 A pseudonym.
different renewable energy project. By linking Gitxaala’s past history with extractive industries, its experiences in interacting with industry, and lack of consultation to current renewable energy proposals, Gitxaala aligns renewable energy development with broader conceptions of industrial development (both past and contemporary manifestations). Wind energy emerges as one component in a larger infrastructure where Gitxaala Nation has historically had limited voice in how projects in their community should proceed. As such, Gitxaala Nation’s skepticism with wind energy reflects what Brian Wynne deems “unrecognized and unexposed historical backlog[s]” of mistrust and alienation of local peoples (Wynne 1996:35). Wind turbine development emblematizes Gitxaala Nation’s previous experiences, as well as their perceptive stance, viewing wind energy both in terms of its impact in their community and as part of a larger energy network linked to oil development.

**Wind Farms and their Links to the Enbridge Pipeline in Gitxaala Nation**

_I found out that with Enbridge they did a dry run with a tanker down Douglas Channel and to turn one corner it took them 6 hours. And that was empty! It took them six hours to turn that. How would it be full? And if they hit a rock there, Kitimat and Hartley Bay would be lost. I think I was at the bottom end of Gil Island... and we just sat there and watched this oil tanker go by at the bottom end of Gil Island. [It was] scary. We’re fishing there and this guy’s going by? I wasn’t too crazy about it. Here we are, trying to make a living and an oil tanker goes by. And what happens with all the fish? – Lorne Gladstone, member of Gitxaala Nation, Ganhada (Raven) Clan (Interview July 7, 2012)_

_What if [wind turbines] were in the ocean? Well, I’ve seen the pictures of some out in the waters out in the ocean. Well, there goes our fish too – Lorne Gladstone (Interview July 7, 2012)_

Gladstone’s account of watching an oil tanker navigate the complex waterways dotting Gitxaala Territory reveals the pervading fear experienced by those in the region. His recollection
of the event highlights the juxtaposition between those “trying to make a living” and the companies inundating the region. In response to an oil tanker passing through Gitxaala Territory, Gladstone wonders what happens to the fish and Gitxaala’s rights to their traditional waterways. When prompted about his concerns with wind turbine development (either on- or off-shore), he returns to fish. His apprehension with oil tankers and wind farms runs parallel, reacting to both proposals in the same manner. Although the two projects differ in terms of potential environmental impacts, they are examined in analogous ways, with discussion concentrated on worries over impacts, loss of harvesting areas, competing access to waterways, and fears of spills or contamination. Such linkages between renewable energy development and oil development are pivotal in understanding why wind turbine proposals in Gitxaala are not necessarily welcomed and are articulated in terms of a larger energy infrastructure and pattern of development.

When examining acceptance or rejection of wind turbines, wind turbines are often popularly portrayed as an alternative to other energy projects (in particular, fossil fuels); ‘clean’ or ‘green’ is assumed to be good, while fossil fuels are therefore ‘un-green’ or ‘un-clean’ (Haggett and Futák-Campbell 2011). Thus, renewable energy projects are often implicitly understood as somehow better than other projects. The acceptance of wind turbines is often assumed when other, more environmentally ‘destructive’ projects are simultaneously proposed; when faced with the choice between renewable energy projects and others, such as oil, renewable energy is presumed to be the automatic choice (Devine-Wright and Howes 2010; Suzuki 2008). Not in Gitxaala Nation. Rather than echoing these themes, wind turbine development is understood as development. Wind energy is not an alternative to oil development. Instead, wind turbines are conceptualized in ways aligned with oil development.
In exploring how wind turbines are comprehended through the lens of development and industry, turbine development and renewable energy projects do not occupy a different place than other development projects. In fact, in the case of wind turbine development in Gitxaala, current or proposed projects play a particularly prominent role in shaping opinion. The region currently faces a series of proposed projects, which include port expansions, LNG facilities, a potash terminal, and the NGP, to name a few. Of particular importance, the NGP and tanker route would potentially introduce an additional 220 tankers carrying bitumen to the North Coast region (Enbridge 2012b). Concerns over Enbridge’s NGP have been extensively documented (Gerson 2012; Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012; West Coast Environmental Law 2011), and Gitxaala Nation is adamantly opposed (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012). Concerns include impact to the waters, traditional food fishing and harvesting, impacts to the environment, reduced access to fishing areas and waterways, and erosion of culture and identity (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012).

The NGP’s impact on Gitxaala Nation is monumental, even if no tanker mishaps occur. Members of Gitxaala Nation continually expressed their worries concerning the project. Of particular significance, the ways in which people understand wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory were intertwined with the NGP, and turbine development was usually only discussed in light of the NGP. Wind turbines in Gitxaala Territory arose as an extension of oil development in a variety of ways: concerns with wind turbines mirrored concerns associated with oil development and worries were intimately connected with water and off-shore wind turbines, reflecting fears generated by the NGP.
Enbridge concerns often overshadowed the discussion of wind turbine development. Initial interview questions prompted participants to discuss what they knew about proposed turbine projects, their thoughts on the projects, and what concerns or benefits the project might create. Many Gitxaala Nation members often responded to these initial questions with ambivalence. When asked what they thought of the wind projects, many participants responded with questions such as, “Like what [should I think about it]?” (Rodman 2012). Often initial questions prompted no response; wind turbine development simply was not an issue of much import, even though they were aware of the proposed wind projects. But the NGP dominated people’s thoughts and seeped into every interview. The open-ended structure of interviews allowed for flexibility over the course of the interview, and this flexibility inevitably led to the NGP. When pressed on wind turbine development, it became clear that wind turbines were ultimately linked to the NGP. Particularly noteworthy were the ways in which concerns with the NGP manifested as concerns with wind turbine development. Typically, wind turbine development presents a set of concerns which impact acceptance or rejection: impacts to birds, bats, and sea life (if off-shore), impacts to the environment due to construction and placement, concerns with visual aesthetics, increased noise from turbine blades, lack of community benefits projects, and a disrupted sense of place may arise (Devine-Wright 2003, n.d.; Haggett 2011; Pasqualetti 2011; Pasqualetti, Gipe, and Righter 2002b; Poumadere et al. 2011; Wolsink 2004).

Concerns expressed by interview participants diverged from expected apprehensions usually associated with wind turbines and instead revolved around mishaps and ecological catastrophes, contamination and spills, and increased cancer risks. These themes surfaced in most interviews with members of Gitxaala Nation. Directly linking wind turbine development impacts with oil industry impacts is quite unique and reflects broader associations with
renewable energy and Gitxaala Nation’s experiences with resource extraction. While literature on wind turbine development discusses how wind turbine projects might be conceptualized in light of previous industry in the region (Devine-Wright & Howes 2010; Gross 2007), no such discussion in the literature exists which accounts for how specific concerns morph to reflect and include concerns traditionally associated with other forms of development. As discussed earlier, most literature discusses potential concerns relating to environmental and ecological impacts, visual impacts, worries over property values, or disparities in community benefits, to name a few.

While at the April Joint Review Panel for Enbridge’s NGP in Prince Rupert, I witnessed Gitxaala Nation’s oral testimony concerning the project. A dominant theme of the proceedings was the threat the project poses to Gitxaala Nation’s culture, identity, and continued survival (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012). The NGP presents an overwhelming and irreversible threat. Discussion also hinged on the certainty. Rather than if, the question remained when would an oil spill occur. Gladstone summarized this in one of our conversations, concluding that a spill “may not be in our lifetimes, but it’ll be in our, in our children’s and grandchildren’s lifetime, and they might not be able to have what we have. Because something will go wrong. It always does. You just never know when” (Interview July 7, 2012). Through the course of these proceedings and during my limited time in the region, I began to understand the devastating effects of the NGP. Of significant concern were the certainty of a spill, irreparable environmental damage, impacts to Gitxaala’s culture and continued existence, loss of access to traditional waterways and fishing areas, and impacts to the sea (in relation to food fishing, commercial fishing, traditional harvesting practices, etc.) (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012). Innes outlines these worries:
And if anything happened, there would be a ripple effect. There would be a negative ripple effect that would start from the beaches and it would hurt the fish and then, it will move on to the birds, then it will move on to the animals. It would go through and finally we ourselves as Kitkatla people would feel the effects if anything happened to any of the species. We are part of a chain. We are a part – we all play a very important role. If that is broken, then there will be a big darkness for someone (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012).

Notions of spills as spreading throughout the territory and beyond manifests frequently, particularly in relation to a spill’s ability to spread throughout the food chain into people and into the future.

Concerns with wind turbines parallel those arising from the NGP. Although not traditionally associated with wind turbines, fears of wind turbines impacting the entirety of Gitxaala Territory and spreading throughout the region emerge. In particular, environmental catastrophes and contamination from mishaps and spills surface among interviewees, as discussed below. In actuality, wind turbines’ ‘destructive’ characteristics are often limited; destruction occurs primarily during the construction phase, and wind turbines are rarely viewed as projects which rank high in their potential to destroy. In contrast, wind turbines are often touted for their minimal environmental impact, but notions of destruction throughout Gitxaala’s territory as a result of turbine development mimic those concerns generated by potential oil tanker spills.

Gitxaala interviewees consider wind turbine development within the framework of the NGP, linking wind turbine development to a larger energy infrastructure and pattern of development interwoven with Alberta oil sands development. Among those less concerned with wind projects, turbines are still comprehended in relation to oil development. Lori Scott, a

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40 A pseudonym.
member of Gitxaala Nation, maintains that “I wouldn’t be worried about it. I mean, if they were building the oil rigs out there I would be worried, because they might, you know, leak oil into the water, but this is just a windmill” (Interview July 26, 2012). Her response, while claiming she is not worried about wind turbine development, contrasts turbines with oil rigs, evoking the ways in which turbines are seen in relation to the NGP. In response to my inquiries as to whether renewable energy projects might be different than other development projects, another member of Gitxaala Nation constructs a response within the same framework: “It wouldn’t destroy as much as like an oil tanker hitting a rock. Especially when it’s full. And everything would be lost….There’s still a lot of damage in Alaska, isn’t there?” (Lorne Gladstone, Interview July 7, 2012).

The 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska arose multiple times as a way to comprehend how a spill might affect the region. Gladstone’s statement proves illustrative, for his answer reflects the linkage of wind turbines and renewable energy to oil development, and destruction and loss then surface as key themes. He considers the destructive components of wind turbine development and their ability to destroy the area, noting that they would not destroy as much “as a tanker hitting a rock.” Aligning destruction associated with wind turbines and destruction associated with an oil spill occurred throughout the entirety of fieldwork. Yet, there is no equivalent of a spill in relation to wind turbines. Gladstone’s sentiments were not unusual. When asked the same question (whether renewable energy projects differ from other development projects) McKay of GEM responded, “I don’t know. What kind of spill are we to expect from a windmill?” (Interview July 24, 2012). Again, McKay immediately introduces a spill in relation to turbine development – a seemingly unusual correlation, which no doubt arises from concerns with the NGP. In the literature, ideas of spills and contamination are never
mentioned regarding wind turbines, furthering the notion that wind turbine development in Gitxaala cannot be separated from Enbridge’s NGP.

Without me invoking the NGP, Innes, asserts that “both of them [Enbridge and wind development] combined could devastate us” (Interview June 3, 2012). Devastation and destruction once again arise as key themes. Innes continues, discussing how turbine development will devastate traditional sites, impact harvesting practices, affect the environment, and hurt the community. For him, devastation refers to both environmental and physical devastation that may occur, but he also links this destruction with impacts to Gitxaala’s culture, traditional practices, and community resulting from large companies and internal community divisions (Rodman 2012).

While destruction, spills, and ecological catastrophe continually surface in discussions, others note worries with contamination and cancer, concerns not typically associated with wind turbine development. As McKay describes, “I guess working with windmills, you can’t end up getting cancer or any other type of disease from maybe cleaning up of a, maybe a little mishap that may happen. I don’t know what the examples of a mishap in a windmill are, besides maybe the turbine falling off or something…Not like a busted pipeline or a beached tanker!” (Interview July 24, 2012). Although McKay does conceptualize wind as having different impacts than oil development, he links the two, evaluating them against one another. Cancer concerns tied to NGP are conflated with the introduction of wind turbines. Cancer pervaded discussion, particularly in association with the NGP. Concerns with contamination and cancer arose in discussions of Enbridge and oil spills in general (Hearing Order OH-4-2011 2012; Rodman 2012). Potential health effects traditionally associated with wind turbines generally relate to
worries over fainting (caused by flicker shadows) and loss of sleep (due to noise and flicker shadows). Cancer fears linked to wind turbine development largely stem from concerns with power lines and energy storage.

Although the Naikun offshore project consists of an underground cable, cancer fears do not arise in relation to the underground cable (Rodman 2012). A few members of Gitxaala relayed to me they had been told the underwater cable might affect fish in the area. However, most interview participants felt the cable would not affect fish, even citing cables installed years ago with continuing abundance of fish after cable placement (Rodman 2012). Given the cable’s lack of association with diminishing fish stocks or cancer, the emergence of cancer as a point of concern stems from another source. Invoking cancer and mishaps, McKay draws attention to the prevalence of these worries. However, by associating these concerns with wind turbines, McKay links wind turbine development with that of oil development, going as far as comparing the two by claiming that wind turbine mishaps “are not like a busted pipeline or beached tanker!”

Mishaps with wind turbines are interwoven with those connected with the NGP. Although concerns are tied to oil spills, fears tied to cancer are conflated with wind production and thus do not necessarily arise from the wind turbines themselves. Rather, they stem from fears tied to the NGP and from a life-cycle understanding of the projects (including the numerous project stages and the varying impacts at each stage).

Gitxaala Territory faces wind turbine threats both on land and offshore. Yet, terrestrial concerns regarding wind turbine development were expressed in relation to water. These worries stem partially from fears related to current development, such as the NGP. Fears relate to impacts on water (both fresh and saltwater) and fishing and traditional food harvesting. While
literature suggests that offshore development experiences more support (Haggett 2011), this is not the case in Gitxaala Territory. In fact, fears usually surface in discussion of offshore projects, rather than the terrestrial wind turbines. On one level, this relates directly to Gitxaala Nation and their existence as a people of the water; their culture and identity stem from this, their food comes from the ocean, and their livelihoods depend on the water. However, the dominance of offshore over onshore wind as worrisome reflects the link to the NGP. Among those who find wind turbine development to be problematic, most interview participants note that the Naikun offshore wind farm would be more ‘devastating’ (Rodman 2012). As one member of Gitxaala Nation explains, “Well, look at the company that wanted to build in the ocean out by Hecate Straight there, you know. I think that’s the one that would ruin everything” (Bobby Dover, Interview August 9, 2012). Dover continued, explaining that the sea conditions in that location are incredibly rough, making it unlikely that turbines could withstand such conditions. His sentiments were not uncommon. Threats the territory faces relate to the ocean. Even when terrestrial turbine development is discussed, concerns inevitably return to the ocean. In response to a question asking him to describe concerns he might have with wind turbines sited on land, McKay offers this account:

Right, which makes me think about the actual location of them on land, because Banks Island is surrounded with little tributaries and it has its own watershed that it provides numerous stocks of fish around the area. And also adjacent to all these shorelines are basically all the seaweed beds and all the other harvestable food that our community harvests within that area. That’s everything along the lines right down from the seaweed to the chiton to the halibut. Talking of those, all these species, because of construction, which would create more soil erosion, which would then filter into the ocean or within the creeks itself, which would also carry chemicals from all their construction (Interview July 24, 2012).

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41 A pseudonym.
Ideas of filtration, chemical contamination, and the spread of soil and construction byproducts arise in McKay’s statement. Concerns with terrestrial turbines intertwine with concerns associated with water and the ocean; soil erosion filtering into the ocean, chemical contamination, and seepage of products into tributaries, creeks, and eventually the ocean all echo concerns expressed with oil development. Although concerns link to oil development, they also reveal a broader understanding of the cumulative impacts of projects. While not traditionally associated with wind turbine development, such fears reflect an acknowledgement of broader concerns associated with the entire life cycle of wind turbine projects.

Associating wind turbine development with the NGP, and thus linking it to a larger energy infrastructure and pattern of development, underscores how Gitxaala evaluates development projects. Technical aspects of the wind turbine technology, its potential environmental impacts, or its health effects are all understood through a broader conceptualization and engagement with Gitxaala’s history and resource development in the region. Whether turbines cause cancer or whether a catastrophe may ensue indicate a broader assessment of development that Gitxaala undertakes. Wind is conceptualized as part of a larger energy infrastructure where the potential for catastrophe is high (both in terms of environmental and cultural impacts). Priority is given to cancer, threats of oil spills, contamination, and impacts

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42 Linking wind turbine development with the NGP also highlights how Gitxaala undertakes a collective form of risk assessment, whereby certain knowledges are valued over others. Turning to the work of Sheila Jasanoff allows for a helpful discussion of risk, with the socially constructed nature of it explored. Jasanoff’s discussion of civic epistemology and her exploration of the cultural dimensions of risk provide some insights. Civic epistemology refers to “the practices by which members of a given society test and deploy knowledge claims used as a basis for making collective choices… These collective knowledge-ways constitute a culture’s civic epistemology” (Jasanoff 2005:255). Trust and memories of past experiences can play a powerful role in collective knowledge making. Thus, it is essential to understand risk as a social process without erasing history, neglecting culture, or privileging isolated facts over more complex frames of meaning (Jasanoff 2005:270). Such a conceptualization proves helpful in understanding Gitxaala’s position regarding wind turbines, where specific risks of wind turbine development are part of a broader collective risk-assessment occurring about development within and surrounding Gitxaala Territory.
to culture and way of life. While such concerns may not typically be associated with wind turbines, they nonetheless evoke how Gitxaala constructs meaning and weighs and prioritizes information.

Gitxaala’s evaluation of wind turbine development cannot be overlooked. Not only is proposed development to occur on their lands, but Gitxaala Nation is also actively engaging with the larger picture of development in the North Coast region. Gitxaala Nation is well aware of the different environmental impacts wind turbines versus oil pose. In fact, Gitxaala expresses a sophisticated understanding of environmental impacts, taking a comprehensive view of life cycles of entire projects and positioning specifics projects within a larger network of energy projects. Yet, first and foremost, Gitxaala views wind turbines and the Enbridge Pipeline as development projects.


Renewable energies within BC are portrayed as opportunities by government and industry alike, with the positive connotations of the ‘opportunity’ highlighted. BC’s 2010 Clean Energy Act explicitly strives “to encourage economic development and the creation and retention of jobs….and] to foster the development of First Nation and rural communities through the use and development of clean or renewable resources” (Province of BC 2013b). Within the province, BC Hydro notes that “there are opportunities to use wind to generate electricity” (BC Hydro 2012f). The Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA), which promotes the development and application of wind energy in Canada, declares:
BC has the great fortune of excellent and extensive wind resources, and a priceless inheritance in its hydroelectric grid, capable of integrating many thousands of megawatts of wind power. Because of wind power’s unmatched ability to meet the multiple challenges now facing BC, CanWEA calls for 5,250 MW of renewable, cost-competitive and low-impact wind energy capacity to be installed in British Columbia by 2025. This homegrown wind energy will generate jobs and economic benefits for British Columbians, greatly lower the greenhouse gas emissions of the province’s expanding economy, and provide reliable power for over 17 per cent of BC’s total electricity requirements (CanWEA n.d.:2).

An emphasis on opportunity, job generation, and economic benefits arises. Implicit in CanWEA’s statement is the assumption that expanding energy development is good, as long as the energy comes from a renewable source. CanWEA also calls our attention to the “great fortune” of BC – who in fact lags behind many provinces in wind production – to highlight the supposedly unique position of BC, furthering the potential for an ‘opportunity’ that cannot be missed. CanWEA stresses the local nature of BC’s wind resources, calling wind a “homegrown” resource from which all British Columbian’s can benefit.

The BC Sustainable Energy Association avers that “if wind turbines were manufactured in BC, their manufacturing and installation would create 6 jobs per MW,” a significant ‘if’ when wind farm developers source parts and labor from outside Canada (Dauncey 2012). Additionally, First Nation involvement within the renewable energy sector is often framed as an opportunity for First Nations to follow an economic development pathway that protects the environment and secures lower energy costs (Dreveskracht 2011; Krupa 2012a; Pembina n.d.; Powell and Long 2010). Multiple conferences provide venues for First Nations to become involved in the renewable energy sector, claiming the “power to move your community forward.”

43 Such conferences emphasize identifying and developing such opportunities. The

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43 From the Alternative Energy for First Nations Gathering, February 17 & 18, 2011, Vancouver, BC.
First Nations Energy and Mining Council’s (FNEMC) outlines energy development in the BC First Nations Energy Action Plan, claiming:

…energy development presents economic opportunities. First Nation creativity, entrepreneurship and initiative in developing renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, hydro and biomass, could be extremely important in “powering” the future both for our communities and the province overall in a sustainable manner that responds to climate change. These and other environmental technologies hold great potential for First Nations and First Nations are best positioned to lead the province in sustainable energy development (FNEMC 2009:5).

Renewable energy development arises as a development opportunity for First Nations, with the potential for First Nations to “power the future in a sustainable manner.” The prevalence of the ‘opportunity’ of wind turbine development surfaces in industry, government, and non-profits’ discussion of wind energy. Yet, a similar understanding of the ‘opportunity’ of wind turbine development does not necessarily exist in Gitxaala Nation.

While members of Gitxaala Nation engage with wind turbine development through the experience of past development and current projects (such as the NGP), others interviewed do not engage with wind projects through the experience of development within the region. Of environmental non-profits in the region and project proponents interviewed, the opportunity of the region surfaces repeatedly. Key factors associated with wind turbine development include opportunity, the untapped ‘resource’ of wind, and the potential of the region.

With the rise of renewable energy projects comes considerable interest in the region amongst project proponents. This interest creates a new market for such projects. The mere process of developing projects, acquiring necessary permits, and completing consultation all serve as opportunities for increasing capital for project proponents and government alike. One employee of an environmental non-profit in Prince Rupert noted how renewable energy
companies were “purely speculative” entities that created commodities, likening them to “vulture capitalists.” Small, quick start-ups emerge, attempt to acquire land, permits, and rights, and then sell these to the next round of companies. Scholars note this phenomena, termed “green grabbing,” as contributing to the appropriation and enclosure of land, the privatization of rights to nature, the creation of new commodities, and the emergence of a new speculative frontier at the hands of the global environmental crisis (Corson and MacDonald 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012; Harvey 2003).\footnote{Green grabbing is defined as the expropriation of land or resources for environmental purposes. Green grabs constitute “forms of enclosure that operate under the guise of addressing the global environmental crisis” (Corson and MacDonald 2012:263). It can involve alienation from land or simply the restructuring of rules and authority in access, use, and management of resources (Fairhead et al. 2012). Green grabbing builds on histories of colonial resource alienation. Such ‘grabbing’ is not necessarily new and has been documented extensively in literature on resource conservation. However, green grabbing has a host of new modes, mechanisms of legitimation, and actors (Corson and MacDonald 2012).} As BC Hydro gives away wind-farm tenures, “companies have engaged in a speculative bonanza in which they have been acquiring effective ownership of… locations for future small hydro and wind-farm developers” (Calvert 2007:231). Echoing the speculative nature of the process, an employee of a local environmental non-profit noted:

It’s like the expression “If you’re not part of the solution, there’s good money to be made in prolonging the problem.” Like the consultant’s mantra? Hey, you have a big hairy project that needs consulting, consulting, consulting, consulting? Ten years on down the road, there’s a culture of people garnering money in order to pay each other to ask questions about each other (Patrick Finch,\footnote{A pseudonym.} Interview July 17, 2012).

This push for renewable energy projects and the ‘opportunity’ of the region arises in the statements of those proposing such projects, local non-profit employees, and consultation specialists, yet this idea of the ‘opportunity’ of renewable energies and their potential rarely surfaces in statements made by members of Gitxaala Nation.
As Matt Burns, former VP of Operations at Naikun, acknowledges, “We’re in the development business, we need to keep our shareholders whole. They made an investment based on certain expectations” (Interview September 26, 2012). Continuing, Burns asserts:

The opportunity is just the vastness of the resource. And, you know, if you’ve looked at some of the other projects, you’ll know there’s a lot of folks up there sticking their claim in, and the reason is, they see the opportunity… It’s a huge resource, it’s a big opportunity for the North, and [there is an] opportunity presenting communities like Prince Rupert of developing an industry up there. And when you think of all the debate and concerns that’s gone on…here’s an alternative! Potentially. And is it, is it an industry that’s as well developed as the oil and gas industry? Probably not. It’s not as mature. So there might be a little, you know, a little bit of uncertainty if you look at the cost of energy, fossil fuels versus renewable energy…So there is some risk involved in that, but we certainly look at it as an opportunity and an alternative to some of the current technology that’s coming out (Interview September 26, 2012).

For industry proponents, wind turbine projects represent an opportunity for development. Not only are proponents concerned with their shareholders, they actively compete against an onslaught of various renewable energy proponents, with the race to tap into the “vastness of the resource” the primary objective. Unlike members of Gitxaala Nation, Burns presents the Naikun project as an alternative to other projects in the region, claiming that “when you think of all the debate and concerns that’s gone…here’s an alternative” (Interview September 26, 2012). While presenting Naikun as a renewable energy alternative, Burns simultaneously describes renewable energies as an industry to be developed on the North Coast. Naikun frames wind turbine development as an opportunity and an alternative to other forms of development, two ideas members of Gitxaala Nation do not express, instead viewing renewable energy as an extension of development.
Scant attention is paid to the potential impacts of the project on the surrounding communities and environment. In discussing concerns, Burns declares:

‘You’ve got people who had in their mind legitimate concerns about things like the crab fishery, or the abalone, or the whales...The traditional food fishery. Legitimate concerns, because in their mind, they were worried about it. And in that case, it’s an educational process, and some people come around and get the information they need and say “Okay, I can support this”’ (Interview September 26, 2012).

While he continues by elaborating how extensively Naikun worked with crab fishers on a variety of fronts (as did the environmental non-profits interviewed), no such discussion occurs for other people who utilize the ocean space and are potentially impacted. Although Burns acknowledges concerns over traditional food harvesting, he contends that a simple process of education can ameliorate worries. Or, in another instance, he proposes that this perfectly understandable skepticism arises since “people are scared of change” (Interview September 26, 2012). Little room is afforded to the peoples who regularly utilize the space. Naikun and environmental non-profits recognize the “legitimate” uses of crab fishing, but little attention is paid to traditional food harvesting, rights of way for personal craft (over shipping traffic), and the importance of the traditional use of the space. Furthermore, Burns delegitimizes these concerns by repeatedly noting that concerns were legitimate “in their [the First Nations’] minds,” rather than simply being legitimate concerns on their own right.

In believing worries concerning traditional uses of the space can be appeased through a process of education, Naikun fails to understand cultural underpinnings, which are rooted in a particular history of destruction and loss, among other factors (Menzies and Butler 2008). Naikun acknowledges this history in a limited capacity:

“We’re a group of a long list of white folks who come in and say “We’ve got this great idea for you!” So, not only do we compete against all the promises that have
been made over decades and get lumped in with people who haven’t done what they said they were going to do, but we’re also competing in real time against other people who have similar ideas and similar projects and are making similar promises (Matt Burns, Interview September 26, 2012).

While acknowledging their place in a “long list of white folks,” Naikun appears to believe that it is simply a matter of out-competing other potential projects and overcoming the history of failed promises. Naikun recognizes its place within this particular context yet does not acknowledge that it is not necessarily about competing with other project proposals. Furthermore, in maintaining that acceptance of the project emerges from an “educational process,” Naikun overlooks the differing cultural knowledges at play. Drawing from Wynne (1996), there are competing knowledge systems informing how wind turbines are understood, and it is not simply that Naikun is better informed, but rather that they are differently informed. Failure to acknowledge this leads to an ‘information deficit’ view of people, whereby the belief that education can fix these ruptures arises. Naikun’s emphasis on educating those impacted by the project exhibits a managerial approach to projects and public engagement, one that overlooks locational issues and socially constructed meanings.

Environmental non-profits discussed concerns with shipping traffic, the crabbing industry, and impacts on migrating animals. Some environmental non-profits in the region, which one might expect to be more cautious regarding potential energy projects, tend to understand wind turbine projects as opportunities for the area. As Finch muses:

Could this region become kind of a center of excellence in that technology, where we could build the components for these things for export to other jurisdictions? [We could] have a whole suite of support service around that type of technology, which would not just be for our own backyard, but which would be for deployment elsewhere (Interview July 17, 2012).
The potential for a renewable energy industry in the region and for aiding Prince Rupert in creating a new renewable energy identity emerges as a defining feature. In wondering if the region could emerge as a “center of excellence,” the statement aligns with the views of project proponents assessing the potential of the industry, development, and the Prince Rupert region.

Shauna McRanor, First Nations Consultation Specialist at Golder Associates, Ltd., also links renewable development to opportunity, yet her stance differs slightly. McRanor notes that clean energy consultation as a business is one that Golder Associates has not developed yet, but from her perspective:

It’s certainly an opportunity. It’s an opportunity to work with First Nations on a natural resource development project that’s a little more acceptable. It’s not as if, you know, we’re not talking about open pit mining, right? So yeah, there’s definitely a market there that I think is vastly underserved (Interview November 1, 2012).

McRanor notes that she speaks from a consultation perspective, and she views the opportunity both in terms of business for Golder and in terms of opportunities for working with First Nations on a resource that’s “a little more acceptable.”

While renewable energy development may present an opportunity for First Nations, at this point in its development, it does not appear to follow a path any different or any more acceptable than other forms of development. In framing discussion around potential for the region and the industry, the people and cultures affected by the project disappear at the expense of grander regional or global benefits, and their concerns are easily overlooked by touting the allure of elusive regional benefits. In refusing to look more closely at the various aspects of renewable energy development, the renewable energy industry risks becoming no different than any form of resource extraction that has emerged on the stage in the North Coast region. By
ignoring impacts to communities, privileging certain claims over others, and overlooking continuing ruptures, this potentially ‘new’ development follows in the path of previous experiences.

**D. Discussion**

When exploring renewable energy on the North Coast, it is tempting to view such projects as less environmentally destructive alternatives to other forms of resource extraction. Moreover, in light of the proposed LNG, it is even more tempting to insert renewables such as wind turbines in place of oil. However, such an uncritical examination of renewable energy, especially in relation to the communities in which projects are to be situated, overlooks the specificity of how these projects might be closely aligned with past industrial development. In Gitxaala, a holistic picture of wind turbine development arises. Wind turbine projects are understood as part of a larger network of energy development and are emblematic of continuing injustices and inequalities. For those in Gitxaala, renewable energy as a separate category of development projects simply does not exist, and any conversation concerning development often recalls past experiences with industry, historical and ongoing grievances, and concurrent development proposals. Wind turbine development in Gitxaala invokes ongoing issues of self-determination, historical state appropriation of resources, government bureaucracies that have done little to benefit Gitxaala, and structures constraining First Nation involvement in such global industries.

At this point in time, wind turbine development’s inevitable entanglement with the NGP cannot be overlooked when considering renewable energy projects. Fears of contamination and
catastrophe, concerns with offshore siting, and explicit comparisons to the NGP arise as key themes when considering wind turbine development. While the economic opportunity of renewable energy development rarely arose as a point of discussion during interviews with members of Gitxaala, these opportunities were highlighted by project proponents, non-profits, and government entities, underscoring the schism between how renewable energies are conceived by those approaching the issue from outside Gitxaala. For Gitxaala, aligning renewable energy development with oil and the history of industrial development on the North Coast makes sense. Differentiating among Enbridge’s promises of “economic opportunities that arise from the project” (Enbridge 2013), BC Chamber of Commerce’s espousing the NGP as “an opportunity BC cannot afford to miss” (Prince George Free Press 2012), and Naikun’s promises of “economic development benefits for local communities” (Naikun 2010) proves challenging.

What distinguishes these renewable energy opportunities from past experiences in Gitxaala? Are they distinguishable (and should they be)? For Gitxaala, distinguishing between renewable energy projects versus other projects is not a productive endeavor. In facing proposed wind turbine projects, Gitxaala draws from past experiences and considers impacts to territory and culture, potential community benefits, experiences with companies, ongoing structural barriers, and continuing marginalization. It makes little sense for Gitxaala to evaluate renewable energy development in any other manner than by examining the larger, more comprehensive picture of industrial resource extraction that feeds directly into Alberta oil development and global shipping and trade. It makes little sense for Gitxaala to evaluate renewable energy versus non-renewable. Similarly, it makes little sense for industries proposing such renewable energy projects to see projects other than as potential opportunities. In a 2001 article in The Economist, Lee Raymond, chairman of ExxonMobil, states that “Energy is the biggest business in the world;
there just isn’t any other industry that begins to compare” (The Economist 2013). If the chairman of ExxonMobil understands energy as energy – “the biggest business in the world” – why should Gitxaala view renewable energy as anything other than the industry of energy?
SECTION 4: WHY THE WINDMILL? CONFUSION, INSTABILITY, & BC HYDRO

A. Introduction

With the question “Why the windmill?” and the ensuing statement, “I would never expect to see a windmill on there [BC Hydro’s website]” one member of Gitxaala Nation unknowingly highlighted key questions in exploring wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory, including the role of BC Hydro, the confusion and uncertainty with BC Hydro’s power procurement practices, the unstable renewable energy industry in BC, and First Nation involvement. Wind turbine development in Gitxaala Nation is riddled with complexities. Historical and contemporary resource extraction factor into how members of Gitxaala Nation approach wind turbines. A context of continual development proposals on the North Coast and uncertainty with Enbridge, proposed LNG facilities, BC Hydro (and power procurement practices), and the nascent renewable energy industry in BC underscore the level of confusion in the region, both for project proponents and those in the region. Like many indigenous groups in Canada and the US, Gitxaala hopes to develop a renewable energy project and is pursuing a joint-venture project (defined as a business agreement where parties develop a new entity by contributing to equity). In these initial phases, Gitxaala is securing partners and funding, the details of which are privy to a select few (Rodman 2012).

Such joint-venture partnerships are often cited as offering significant economic benefits, empowering stakeholders, increasing equity and community involvement, and offering a viable development pathway (Dreveskracht 2011; Flanagan 2006; Helin 2006). However, such joint-

As previously explored, Gitxaala sees the introduction of wind projects as problematic. However, this is not to imply that Gitxaala opposes community-based development of such projects. While the complexities of wind turbine development cannot be reduced to a singular unifying narrative in Gitxaala Nation, leadership and project participants expressed that if economic potential exists, such development must occur under the control of Gitxaala Nation.
ventures may intensify uneven power distributions, difficulties in the inclusion of knowledge, assumptions of shared visions, and inabilities to express cross-cultural differences (Castro & Nielsen 2001; Mitchell 2005; Nadasdy 2003, 1999; Natcher et al. 2005). Gitxaala’s steps toward a wind turbine venture reflect these tensions. Difficulties abound. Community leaders possess a desire for a joint-venture wind turbine project, yet they face complications in moving forward with a project. By exploring uncertainties in the renewable energy industry in BC and by examining the obfuscated role of BC Hydro in renewable energy development, the hurdles confronting BC First Nations hoping to spearhead involvement in renewable energy projects emerge as numerous and overwhelming.

**B. Uncertainty and the Renewable Energy Industry in BC**

Identified areas for wind production in BC include the North Coast, northern Vancouver Island, and the Peace River region. On the North Coast, wind power potential could total approximately 5,000 MW (Salter 2008:2). Yet, BC lags behind other provinces. The last province to pursue utility-scale wind power, BC has only four operating wind projects and a total of six projects scheduled for completion by 2014 (BC Hydro 2012f; Salter 2008:15).

Attempting to discern the process and understand frustrations of pursuing renewable energy development from the perspective of a First Nation, I began investigating how Gitxaala Nation could establish a wind turbine project. My experiences reflect the level of confusion with the renewable energy industry in both the North Coast and throughout BC. On my first day at the

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47 Operating wind farms include the Bear Mountain Wind Farm, the Dokie Ridge Wind Farm, Tumbler Ridge Wind Farm, and Grouse Mountain’s Eye of the Wind project. Although BC has multiple utility-scale wind projects, BC Hydro’s website does not reflect accurate information, a further testament to the level of confusion regarding renewable energy in BC. BC Hydro’s website claims “there are no utility scale wind farms in BC” (BC Hydro 2012f).
Gitxaala Environmental Monitoring (GEM) office, I met with members of GEM to discuss my research and how I could assist GEM in current projects. GEM members explained that gaining a sense of the active permits in their territory, as well as exploring the process of wind turbine development, would prove beneficial. They sought information regarding required resources, uncovering potential concerns, and examining potential barriers. Leaving the office, I departed with the sense that Gitxaala faced a stream of developers and project proposals in their territory but lacked the resources to manage the onslaught of project proposals, Environmental Assessments, and requests for information flooding through their doors. I naively presumed I could provide them with what I thought were straightforward answers. Unbeknownst to me, I would spend the next nine months trying to answer these ostensibly simple queries.

My quest presented me with a confusing maze of limited information, chameleon companies, and unclear steps concerning how to start a renewable energy project (without factoring how a First Nation might start such a project). Even ascertaining whether a wind developer existed proved arduous. I attempted to identify all companies proposing wind turbine projects in the immediate area. After identifying the main projects (Naikun Offshore Wind Farm, proposed by Naikun, the Mount MacDonald Wind Energy Project, proposed by Rupert Peace Power Corp, and the Banks Island and the Mount Hays Projects, proposed by Katabatic), I contacted each company. Contacting companies provided me with a new set of obstacles; many companies had gone through numerous name changes, lost investors and financing, and lost key personnel (Anthony Duggleby, former Chief Executive Officer of Katabatic, died).

48 As of November 2012, Sea Breeze Power Corporation proposed another wind farm in the region, the Tuck Inlet Wind Farm.
Katabatic’s project proved particularly difficult. Not only did Katabatic also go by the name of North Coast Wind Energy Corp. (a joint venture with Germany’s Deutsche Bank), but it was also known by a third name, Orca Power, on various documents. Originally a casino operation based in Lithuania, the company left the gaming industry in search of new investments. It subsequently purchased and evolved into Orca Power Corp, eventually expanding in 2011 to include Katabatic Power Corp, owning approximately 48 percent of the company (Kauth 2009; Orca Power 2011:2). Katabatic’s shifting identity illustrates a level of instability not uncommon within the industry. Even obtaining company contact information proved tedious, with the series of name and investor changes complicating matters. The search unearthed inactive company websites, lack of proper or outdated contact information, and eventually led me to the Environmental Assessment Office’s Project Information Center (EAO-PIC) for contact information. Even companies contacted via information gleaned from official EAO-PIC documents did not have correct information, and companies tersely responded to email inquiries. In one case, although utilizing contact information reported on the government’s EAO-PIC website, I received an abrupt email explaining that the person I sought did not work for the company and the respondent was annoyed by people contacting him, suggesting that I contact the ‘correct’ company to get accurate information.

The renewable energy industry and approval process suffers from a lack of transparency. Acquiring basic contact information turned into a month-long ordeal. As a graduate student, I had the time and means to track these companies, but many people and groups who desire involvement in renewable energy development do not. In an interview with Shauna McRanor, a
First Nations Consultation Specialist at Golder Associates Ltd. in Victoria, BC, \(^{49}\) she echoed my experience and affirmed that “just trying to find the basic information to start, trying to find that initial, introductory sort of information is obviously, it’s like looking for a needle in a haystack. It’s not very easily identifiable. Kind of drilling down to getting the right contact, getting the right people to talk to, where to turn next, is not an easy process” (Interview November 1, 2012).

Difficulties encountered in this initial search reflect larger problems in the renewable energy industry in British Columbia (Hunter 2012). Name changes, shifts in investors, new financiers, and collapsing companies are industry hallmarks. The inchoate industry struggles to move forward while simultaneously boasting a series of grand promises, such as their ability to help meet BC’s target of achieving energy self-sufficiency. According to the Canadian Association for Renewable Energies, “Canada urgently needs a new agency to promote RETs [renewable energy technologies], which should include federal and provincial departments, utilities, local municipalities and industry, to work collaboratively on exploiting the opportunities offered by renewable energy sources” (Islam et al. 2004:498).

Renewable energy development varies by province. Unlike in other provinces, where the Crown utility operates some of the larger wind farms (such as in Saskatchewan), private proponents play a large role in BC’s wind energy sector (Calvert 2007:136). BC is marked by independent wind companies. Speculative in nature, these companies possess small sums of

\(^{49}\) As previously discussed, Golder Associates is one of numerous environmental consulting firms in the region. Golder Associates was selected for an interview because the company previously worked with North Coast Wind Energy in 2008 on the Banks Island North Wind Energy Project. It is important to note that Golder Associates derives revenue from working both with and for First Nations. As agents appointed by these companies, they work to negotiate land and resource deals. As such, McRanor’s statements are partial. McRanor’s specific focus as a First Nations Consultation Specialist makes her a key informant, one whose knowledge and expertise afford her a pivotal position, granting access to information I would not otherwise have obtained (see Wolf 2001:52). Additionally, McRanor is one of many players vying for Aboriginal business and is someone whose position and knowledge are intimately linked to the necessity of needing a First Nations specialist to negotiate the complex processes and interactions during consultation.
seed capital and “identify wind sites and put together large utility scale projects” (Salter 2008:25). Essentially, companies identify an area for wind potential, monitor and find wind sites (potentially over 2-3 years), prepare a bid (another 2 years), and are potentially offered a contract award (power purchase agreement) with a utility company (BC Hydro). The province has been issuing investigative permits to private wind developers. As of 2007, a concentration of wind farm investigative permits could already be seen. Only 10 companies owned approximately 75 percent of the investigative permits issued (Calvert 2007:142). Although investigative permits are initially issued for two years, developers can renew their permits and apply for a “License of Occupation,” which initially extend for 30 years and grant developers rights of ownership (Calvert 2007:145). Additionally, foreign ownership of wind farms is far from strict. Although companies must be BC-registered, they can effectively pay a fee to obtain registration as a BC company.

Funding remains a significant hurdle, with most wind development companies possessing little money upon start-up. Companies eventually acquire investors or are funded through stocks. But, utility companies and turbine suppliers (such as GE, Vestas, or Siemens) prefer to interact with established companies, creating further difficulties for small, independent companies (Salter 2008:25). Power procurement practices also prove to be an obstacle in BC. Companies must successfully win utility bids in order to move proposed projects forward. The process leaves many questions for companies and First Nations seeking involvement in BC’s renewable energy industry. Wind developers must woo both utility companies and turbine suppliers, but turbine suppliers generally only accept orders that require delivery up to two years

50 Power procurement and BC Hydro are further discussed in the Instability and BC Hydro section of this thesis. Independent Power Producers (IPPs) assist BC Hydro in meeting energy demands; BC Hydro acquires power from IPPs, who develop and operate power projects (BC Hydro 2012c).
out and often pass on bidding on numerous projects (Salter 2008:26). Wind turbine development is characterized by high risk and much uncertainty: small companies lack the necessary funding and are forced to negotiate with large suppliers, receiving a contract from a utility company remains incredibly difficult with an unclear process, and if a wind farm comes to fruition, money is only made if the project performs financially.

In an indicative example, EarthFirst Canada, Inc., building one of the province’s first wind farms, the Dokie Ridge Wind Project in the Peace River region, filed for creditor protection due to financial problems (Matas 2008). Due to their inability to meet financial obligations, EarthFirst Canada, Inc. sold the Dokie Ridge wind project to GE Energy Financial Services (Kauth 2009; ETC Green 2012). The case of EarthFirst Canada Inc. is not uncommon in the renewable energy sector, and numerous wind farm companies currently suffer the same fate, leaving many wondering whether these companies can fulfill their commitments to deliver energy (Matas 2008).

A series of companies claim to be on the brink of significant progress, yet most companies fail to produce. In 2007, Katabatic’s Chief Executive Officer at the time, Anthony Duggleby, asserted, “We're in talks with the Gitxaala Nation to develop the world's largest wind farm on Banks Island, south of Prince Rupert…By forging a relationship with the Gitxaala to develop clean power, we're ahead of the curve” (Newswire 2007). However, the Banks Island project, like most, sits in limbo. Duggleby’s assertions are similar to claims made by other companies.

During my interview with Naikun, their company also claimed to be leaders in their field and the furthest along in wind farm development in the province. Such statements exhibit the
belief that wind and renewable energies will figure prominently in the future, but always just around the bend. In actuality, the industry reflects the boom-and-bust cycle of renewable energy development, where companies are sold, lose funding, or disappear. Both companies’ insistence of being “leaders in the field” parallels how wind developers often portray their projects. Haggett and Futák-Campbell observe that developers often emphasize how “well designed” projects are and that they are ready to be implemented, if not for getting “bogged down” by public opinion (2011:215).

Wind farms typically have high initial capital costs (though capital costs are drastically reduced upon completion), must secure funding and investors, and must maintain relations and account to shareholders, which all prove significant barriers to the implementation of wind farms in Canada (Islam et al. 2004:506). Naikun cited securing funding, keeping their shareholders whole, and having a responsibility to their investors as a primary concern (Rodman 2012). Furthermore, they recognized they were better off than most, noting that “We’re fortunate in our case that we have some money from investors that’s allowed us to maintain that [relationship] and a current project” (Matt Burns, Interview September 26, 2012). Commenting on the industry, Finch described how “it’s kind of a non-existent or nascent industry trying to figure out how to get its toe in the door” (Interview July 17, 2012). A high degree of uncertainty, unclear regulations and processes of power procurement, shaky access to capital, and a new uncharted industry combine to form a renewable energy industry in BC that leaves potential developers with more questions than answers, which significantly hampers the potential of renewable energy development by private companies and First Nations alike.
C. Instability and BC Hydro: Powering B.C. with Clean, Reliable Electricity for Generations?

The Role of BC Hydro

Electricity generation falls mainly under provincial jurisdiction in Canada. Generation, transmission, and distribution within a province are usually the responsibility of a single, provincially-owned Crown corporation. As British Columbia’s power provider, BC Hydro Power Authority works to plan and deliver “the clean energy required to meet British Columbia’s growing demand for electricity” (BC Hydro 2012a). In addition to BC Hydro’s transmission and distribution lines, the BC Hydro system connects to those in Alberta and the Western grid, allowing BC Hydro to sell power throughout Canada and into the US, particularly Washington and California (BC Hydro 2012a). Wind power developers in BC must secure contracts with BC Hydro. Developers utilize BC Hydro’s transmission lines, even if they seek to sell power outside the province, making BC Hydro the gatekeeper on most energy projects in the province. Independent Power Producers (IPPs) assist BC Hydro in meeting energy demands; BC Hydro acquires power from IPPs, who develop and operate power projects (BC Hydro 2012C). BC Hydro employs IPPs when facing a gap in electricity needed given the electricity BC Hydro can supply. IPPs may include First Nations, private companies, municipalities, or customers; companies currently proposing wind turbines in the North Coast region fall under the IPP category. BC Hydro acquires power from IPPs by awarding certain IPPs power purchase agreements, or contracts, mainly through a competitive call process (or through a bilateral agreement or standard or open offer).

One such competitive call, the Clean Power Call, seeks to “ensure that there is sufficient clean, renewable energy to meet forecast electricity demand” (BC Hydro 2010:1). The most
recent Clean Power Call occurred in November 2008, when BC Hydro received 68 proposals from 48 proponents. BC Hydro selected 27 projects, which included 6 wind projects (BC Hydro 2010:1). In addition to producing electricity qualifying as clean or renewable, BC Hydro conducted risk assessments of proposed projects based on financial strength, technical feasibility, engagement with First Nations, and likelihood of securing permits and approvals (BC Hydro 2010:2-3). BC Hydro’s Clean Power Call, as well as other various power calls, presents a plethora of obstacles for IPPs (those experienced specifically by First Nations are discussed in a following section). The Merrimack Report on BC Hydro’s Energy Procurement Practices, a report issued by the Merrimack Energy Group at BC Hydro’s request to conduct an independent inquiry of energy procurement practices, outlines a variety of shortcomings in BC Hydro’s practices. Key weaknesses of the Clean Power Call include: lack of transparency, inadequate information provided to bidders, irregular timing for energy procurements, failure to reflect project viability in evaluation criteria, an unnecessary emphasis on price in selecting winning projects, and the dominance of wind and hydro in securing contracts (Merrimack 2011:2).

One major issue identified by a range of stakeholders includes the “high attrition rate of projects that have been awarded contracts” (Merrimack 2011:8). This is primarily due to awarding contracts to inexperienced and under-funded developers, an overemphasis on price, an under-emphasis on project maturity and viability, an uncertain political environment (making it difficult to raise capital), and irregular calls for power. Report recommendations (to name a few) include making energy procurement processes more transparent for stakeholders and First

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51 In British Columbia, energy is classified as renewable or clean if facilities comply with “applicable Federal and Provincial environmental regulations” and the electricity generated is in a facility that uses clean or renewable electricity resources or technologies, including biogas, biomass, energy recovery generation, geothermal, hydrocarbon, hydro, hydrogen, municipal solid waste, solar, tidal, wave, or wind energy (Province of BC n.d.).
Nations by making power calls smaller and more frequent, preparing energy procurement procedures and a code of conduct, and developing project viability criteria and transparency weightings for price and non-price factors (Merrimack 2011:2).

As discussed earlier, the uncertainty and instability facing renewable energy companies remain high, and BC Hydro’s power call and procurement process directly contribute to the confusion. Drawing attention to the sporadic power call process, Finch states, “I could imagine it must be frustrating to go through a lengthy environmental assessment process and just be told [by BC Hydro], ‘Oh, not this year’” (Interview July 17, 2012). Citing BC Hydro’s power procurement procedures, Burns of Naikun laments, “it leaves you a little bit vulnerable…Hydro has said a lot about their next procurement cycle, but they haven’t been definitive as to when that’s going to be. So, it kind of leaves you in the state where we are right now, which is maintaining the relationships, keeping the project current” (Interview September 26, 2012). Naikun remains one of the lucky few, in that it has more funding than most independent renewable energy companies and can await the next power call. McRanor echoes concerns expressed by Burns, claiming that “there’s certain things even about the process that I think even some proponents, even non-First Nation proponents, of these projects find kind of bizarre or a little different” (Interview November 1, 2012). As identified both by external reviews and those involved in projects, BC Hydro’s power acquisition process remains a source of frustration and an obstacle to renewable energy development.
An Unclear Moment for BC Hydro

Questions remain regarding how the province, and BC Hydro, will meet the province’s growing energy needs. First Nations and energy developers seeking involvement in BC’s renewable energy industry face a barrage of questions and must work with BC Hydro (an organization struggling to navigate uncertainties on the North Coast), BC Hydro’s future role, and complexities of the Integrated Resource Plan (discussed below). It is a markedly uncertain moment for BC Hydro in the North Coast region, with the NGP and liquefied natural gas (LNG) dominating discussion. According to McRanor, “there’s a lot of activity [in the region] and BC Hydro is really struggling to get a handle on what they may have to service” (Interview November 1, 2012). Of particular importance for BC Hydro is the LNG industry. How many LNG facilities are to be built on the North Coast and who BC Hydro will provide power to dominate discussion.

LNG facilities prove particularly pivotal for a variety of reasons. Two to three LNG facilities are proposed on the North Coast.\(^5\) LNG facilities consume large amounts of electricity; if two plants are built, BC Hydro could experience a 25 percent increase in demand (Hunter 2012). BC Hydro currently expects two LNG facilities, one large and one small, built on the North Coast, but the contingency forecast in BC Hydro’s Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) predicts a third large LNG facility (Shauna McRanor, Interview November 1, 2012).\(^5\) Furthermore, new regulations for natural gas complicate BC Hydro’s position. In June 2012, the provincial government proposed updated criteria for evaluating natural gas when utilized by

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\(^5\) Two plants are currently planned for Kitimat, BC (located 200 km southeast of Prince Rupert) to open as early as 2017. However, Prince Rupert is also an area of interest for LNG facilities (Shauna McRanor, Interview November 1, 2012).

\(^5\) See the Integrated Resource Plan in the following section and BC Hydro’s Integrated Resource Plan (BC Hydro: 2012c) for further discussion.
LNG facilities and redefined natural gas as a clean energy only when used by an LNG facility (Canadian Press 2012a). These regulations exempt LNG facilities from BC’s clean energy targets, as outlined in BC’s Clean Energy Act. BC’s Chamber of Commerce maintains that this change could boost the energy industry, allowing BC Hydro, public producers, First Nations, and LNG plants to generate their own power for their facilities (Canadian Press 2012a), further allowing LNG facilities to power their operations through the use of natural gas. Although the BC Chamber of Commerce heralds the shift, for BC Hydro it creates uncertainty. By relieving BC Hydro of the need to service these facilities, it “changes their load forecast fundamentally,” since they may not need to service LNG facilities, build service lines to provide power, or deal with as intense a demand increase (Shauna McRanor, Interview November 1, 2012). In addition to creating numerous questions for BC Hydro, the redefinition proved contentious, with many critics viewing the shift as a tactic by the government to circumvent its goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions. As evinced by the confusion in the region, in the proposed number of LNG facilities and definitions of clean energy, and in BC Hydro’s role in providing future electricity demands, a far from amenable climate materializes for potential renewable energy developers.

Another source of confusion lies in BC Hydro’s IRP. Mandated by BC’s Clean Energy Act, BC Hydro created an IRP “for conservation and for acquiring sufficient generation and transmission resources to reliably and cost-effectively meet customers' anticipated future electricity needs” (BC Hydro 2012d). Encompassing generation, transmission, and demand-side measures in one plan, the “integrated” nature of the plan diverges with past practices of British

54 An objective of BC’s Clean Energy Act is to generate at least 93 percent of their electricity from clean or renewable resources and to build the necessary infrastructure and transmission lines.
Columbia Utilities Commission,\textsuperscript{55} which analyzed transmission separately. Significant objectives of the IRP include conservation, building and reinvesting in existing assets, buying more ‘made-in-BC’ power, and preparing for potentially greater demand (Rodman 2012). The 20-year plan outlines how BC Hydro plans to meet future demand in electricity growth and also explores market opportunities to support clean energy and economic development (BC Hydro 2012b). The plan outlines BC Hydro’s course for ensuring that 93 percent of energy generation comes from clean or renewable energy resources, thus assisting in meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets required by the \textit{Clean Energy Act} (BC Hydro 2012c). At the time of writing, BC Hydro submitted their IRP (December 2012), after completing a draft IRP in May of 2012. It is not known when the report will be made available to the public.

\textbf{First Nation Involvement in BC Hydro}

First Nation involvement in BC Hydro has received considerable attention (BC Hydro 2012e; FNEMC 2011; Merrimack Energy 2011). BC Hydro’s history of massive hydropower projects continues to impact relations between First Nations and BC Hydro. Marked by environmental impacts, flooding (which resulted in loss of important cultural and archaeological sites), displacement of First Nation communities, and lack of proper engagement and consultation with First Nations, these large-scale projects continue to inform First Nation-BC Hydro relations. Local communities were often disregarded and ‘big-picture,’ cumulative

\textsuperscript{55} In 2010, BC Hydro and the BC Transmission Corporation consolidated into one entity, as mandated by British Columbia’s \textit{Clean Energy Act}. Implications of changes to the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) are beyond the scope of this paper. The Clean Energy Act “affirms and modernizes the role of the BCUC,” essentially reuniting BCUC with BC Hydro (BC Hydro n.d.;1-2). BCUC previously acted in the best interest of rate-payers, but with the move, the ability of BCUC to oversee BC Hydro remains significantly limited (for instance, it removes BCUC’s ability to approve BC Hydro’s long term plans and removes BCUC from review and approval of major projects) and is a noted concern (Shauna McRanor Interview, November 20120).
impacts were ignored, with First Nations continuing to feel the effects of BC Hydro’s projects (Calvert 2007; Hume 1992; Windsor 2005). Tied to this history, many First Nations have a desire and interest in renewable energy projects, but they face structural barriers in implementing such projects. Like many First Nations in BC, Gitxaala Nation faces numerous obstacles in establishing a renewable energy project. BC Hydro plays a pivotal role in their frustrations.

Gitxaala Nation Band Council member Raymond Ferris expressed interest in exploring the process of establishing wind turbines in Gitxaala territory. He discussed how Gitxaala received no guidance in starting a project:

> See what other First Nations are in this and where are they in this process? Are they in development? Are they delivering energy now or what? That would be useful. We got to figure out [how] all these pieces all fit together. What everybody, what role everybody plays, if any. I keep hearing little bits and pieces...You know, I’ve kind of heard a bit. Would be nice to know though, right? (Interview August 13, 2012).

Not only does Ferris highlight how little support they have received, as many First Nations do in commenting on BC Hydro, but he draws attention to the issue of financing. Ferris explains, “When you look at all that, what our needs are, the capacity that we don’t have... We try to negotiate those things through negotiations that you want development. This is your proposal, you should be paying for capacity. But it’s like squeezing money out of a rock!” (Interview August 13, 2012). Gitxaala Nation’s experiences are not uncommon. The First Nations Energy and Mining Council comments:

> Currently, there is no clear framework that ensures First Nations full participation in energy development, or to address First Nations’ legitimate concerns about the adverse effects of energy development within our traditional territories. Further, First Nations across British Columbia already deal with a staggering number of resource development pressures in other sectors, including mining, forestry, and agriculture” (FNEMC 2009:4).
Gitxaala Nation should not be in a position where they must expend resources, time, and money simply to understand the process, but they, like many First Nations, find themselves in such a predicament. Lack of support, guidance, and funding opportunities, key issues highlighted by Ferris, are pervasive when exploring BC Hydro and First Nation involvement in BC’s renewable energy industry. Not only do First Nations have numerous structural roles to fulfill and are expected to be governance institutions, provide social services and education, and ensure environmental protection, but they are also expected to be nimble entrepreneurs in a rapidly evolving renewable energy market. Yet, the playing field is far from equal. First Nations do not have the same resources to devote simply to making sense of the shifting terrain of BC’s renewable energy landscape. Furthermore, First Nations are treated in a contradictory manner; they are simultaneously treated like other project developers (in that they enter the same power calls, do not receive guidance, and are expected to navigate project development with the same resources) while BC Hydro continues to interact with First Nations as victims, rather than project proponents. As explored below, this creates a complex maze for First Nations to navigate.

A logical starting point given their status as gatekeepers for all independent power projects, I turned to BC Hydro, hoping the government provided information to First Nations and IPPs. As McRanor explains, “I think one of the first steps for First Nations is to get a contact in BC Hydro to help them, because really, BC Hydro knows some of this stuff. It’s just a question of, is it organized in any way yet? Is it a question of just firing off a brochure?” (Interview November 1, 2012). BC Hydro’s website had a dearth of information regarding First Nations and renewable energy. While BC Hydro’s site devotes sections to IPPs and First Nation consultation, their website lacks a section for First Nations desiring to directly explore renewable energy. BC Hydro lumps First Nations with IPPs, failing to acknowledge that First Nations
might require different types of assistance or resources when initiating a project. Moreover, in concentrating on their duty to consult, BC Hydro fails to treat First Nations as proponents.

Given BC Hydro’s lack of easily accessible information online, I contacted BC Hydro. After speaking with an energy procurement advisor at BC Hydro, the energy procurement advisor informed me that the best source of information was the Clean Energy Association of BC. I had already investigated this organization, only to find a series of guidebooks, roadmaps, and a list of resources. BC’s energy procurement advisor also instructed me to consult “Clean Energy Production in BC” by Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, an inter-agency guidebook for proponents interested in developing clean energy projects (Province of BC 2011a). However, I was advised that the guidebook does not provide “business, technical, or financial aspects of project development” but instead focuses on approvals required at the various levels of government (pers. comm.). I was specifically directed to Chapter 10, “Consulting with First Nations” by BC Hydro and told that if interested in learning about power procurement for First Nations, I should contact the Clean Energy Association BC, not BC Hydro.

BC Hydro’s correspondence with me proves disconcerting on multiple fronts. BC Hydro’s response directed me to another organization, Clean Energy BC, and BC Hydro stressed that if I sought information on First Nation power procurement, it would not be found with BC Hydro. Yet, BC Hydro acts as a gatekeeper to renewable energy projects and one would expect accessible information. Furthermore, when BC Hydro directed me elsewhere, they pointed to the “Clean Energy Production in BC” guidebook, which dealt solely with First Nation consultation, rather than First Nation-operated renewable energy projects. The chapter only provided contextual information for consulting with First Nations (Province of BC 2011a:105). Such a
move underscores the conventional process of merely consulting with First Nations, instead of supporting First Nations in starting their own projects and providing them with the necessary information (and thus further marginalizes them). Rather than providing me with information, BC Hydro “passed the buck,” emphasizing my role in tracking down information rather than providing basic answers. BC Hydro fails to treat First Nations as proponents, instead perpetuating a cycle where First Nations are not seen as project initiators (and hence consultation remains BC Hydro’s priority). Furthermore, rather than being attentive to the specific positionality of First Nations and the unique tactics they may have to take, BC Hydro does little to assist First Nations.

BC Hydro did not provide answers, even if they did know the answers. McRanor elucidates this point, commenting that “BC Hydro is a massive organization. The Aboriginal Relations and Negotiations group has all these different departments, properties, capital projects team, corporate relations team, so it’s all quite carved up and energy planning is a different group entirely” (Interview November 1, 2012). I spoke with an employee from energy procurement and was referred to Clean Energy BC, which implies that BC Hydro has not done internal work on making this information transparent, emphasizing McRanor’s statement. The questions I asked (How do we get involved? What does the process look like? What is the timeline? How much money is required? Are there successful examples in the province? Is there specific First Nation evaluation criteria?) are basic questions First Nations ask. That BC Hydro does not provide answers exacerbates the technical and financial barriers facing First Nations. Even McRanor, whose unique position as a First Nations consultation specialist might lead one to believe that she had the answers, did not:
It’s a really good question. It’s one that I don’t know the answer to, and to be honest, I don’t know how well developed that is even in Hydro…It’s not very transparent. I mean, the fact that I’m so close to it and I can’t even answer your question kind of suggests that there’s some work to be done…The bottom line is a lot the questions you’re asking are very common questions for First Nations and a lot of them are struggling with “How do we get involved? How do we evaluate the risks for our community? We don’t want to put these years in that take up a bunch of time and our money to just fail at the end”…It’s not an easy, straight-forward thing to understand (Interview November 1, 2012).

After exploring resources on the Internet, my questions remained unanswered, as most resources offered only a variety of generic roadmaps with little concrete detail. The First Nations Energy and Mining Council (FNEMC), which operates under the authority of the First Nations Summit to support and facilitate energy development,56 provided links to workshops and a series in partnership with Clean Energy BC, but their website did not offer specific information. FNEMC did not contain any sections on renewable energy development on their website. Most of their site focused on mining and general opportunities for involvement and reform not specifically linked to renewable energy development. FNEMC lists a “BC First Nations Energy Action Plan” outlining objectives and goals for renewable energy development but does not provide details on how these might occur. Another relevant section, entitled “IPP Case Studies,” currently lists one example involving a hydroelectric project (FNEMC 2012). Yet, this project remains one many First Nations would not consider renewable, given its status as a hydro project.

Various non-profits offer assistance to First Nations but little readily available information concerning renewable energy project development exists. Clean Energy BC,
renewable energy industry advocates in the region, offers the most detailed information related to funding and starting a project. They present a series of guidebooks and resources for IPPs seeking to enter into the industry. One detailed workbook, the “First Nations Renewable Energy Roadmap,” part of the Coast Opportunity Funds Bulletin Series produced by ISIS Research Centre at the Sauder School of Business (UBC), was developed based on feedback presented by North Coast First Nations to provide “communities with strategic information and linkages specific to renewable energy and the potential it has to support the values and traditions of First Nations communities” (Hild 2011:3). While the workbook does provide valuable information and is a positive step forward, the bulletin remains generic, with broad categories such as “Develop An Energy Profile,” “Creating a First Nation Energy Plan,” “Planning and Implementation,” and “Managing Energy Infrastructure.” Their steps are too simplistic where, for example, the community engagement section consists of identifying shared community interests, values, and goals and the building capacity section consists of working with “equipment suppliers and service vendors that focus on skills transfer to people within the community” (Hild 2011:10,15). While these roadmap documents are positive steps, they are not sufficient to guide a renewable energy project through the web of agencies and processes, nor should they replace clear, easily accessible information made available to First Nations by the government. The fact that these roadmaps even exist underscores the failure on the part of the government and BC Hydro to provide adequate information to First Nations and IPPs entering the process. Industry advocates and non-profits should not be the only entities creating these guidelines – the government necessarily must take a larger role in outlining the steps involved in starting renewable energy projects and must set clear guidelines for First Nation involvement. In addition to shifting to treat First Nations as proponents, BC Hydro must also acknowledge that
First Nations will necessarily have divergent tactics and hurdles than other IPPs. Not only that, but First Nations will continue to interact with BC Hydro from a position which draws from historical grievances experienced with BC Hydro.

First Nation involvement in the IRP is also indicative of the broader frustrations First Nations express in interacting with BC Hydro, making involvement in the IRP important to explore. First Nations (and IPPs) seeking to understand the IRP process encounter an amorphous plan riddled with ambiguity, yet the IRP (a plan most have not seen) is important in understanding how BC Hydro hopes to meet energy demands and the specific role renewable energies will play in this future. BC Hydro conducted a series of workshops for stakeholders and First Nations both before and during the drafting of IRP. During 2011, nine workshops were held throughout BC (with seventy-eight First Nations participating) and in 2012 input into the draft was sought. Feedback given by First Nations highlights the difficulties the IRP poses and reflects a lack of clarity in understanding the IRP. During the 2011 workshops, many issues were raised, but in particular, differing definitions of renewable energy, unclear guidelines, frustrations with the power acquisition process, historical grievances with BC Hydro, concerns with consultation and capacity building, and lack of advisory services to First Nations surfaced. Commenting on the IRP, First Nations cited a rushed timetable, uneven scalar components of the plan (interest in a territory planning view over a province-wide view was expressed), lack of capacity among First Nations, a fear of investing in a project only to have it hit a roadblock and lose money, no information regarding power call timings, concerns First Nations would suffer from higher electricity rates (also tied to smart meters), and a desire for revenue sharing as well as First Nation ownership of projects (BC Hydro: 2011). Far from an exhaustive list, concerns cover reoccurring issues raised by First Nations in the nine IRP workshops. Such concerns align
with general First Nation concerns with BC Hydro and First Nation involvement, as discussed below.

General concerns noted by First Nations mimic Gitxaala Nation’s experiences. When speaking to members of GEM – those most likely to have IRP exposure – none knew of the IRP. After explaining to McKay my own confusion with the IRP, he responded, “the government likes to keep us confused” (Rodman 2012). In perusing BC Hydro’s list of First Nations invited to IRP planning workshops, I discovered that Gitxaala First Nation was invited to participate but had never responded to the invitation. One member of GEM believed that the IRP was more focused on the Northwest Transmission Line, a draft recommendation of the IRP, so had chosen not to attend. This member guessed that the more likely reason was that the IRP “just wasn’t a priority,” or that they may not have gotten a notice, given the flood of papers GEM receives. As the discussion continued, the distaste for BC Hydro became more apparent; it was noted that BC Hydro sends GEM paperwork they cannot keep track of and that BC Hydro’s operations are all “hoops and barrels” since it is “all wildcat stuff [and] every so often there’s a purchase agreement” (Rodman 2012). Lack of a reciprocal relationship between First Nations and BC Hydro surfaced. From Gitxaala and other First Nation perspectives, BC Hydro continually asks for information, with very little given in return when First Nations ask the same of BC Hydro. Furthermore, if a First Nation fails to respond to BC Hydro’s requests, there can be serious consequences. Gitxaala’s experiences further highlight the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the IRP. For a document that outlines and determines BC Hydro’s options and plans for the next two decades, very little is understood about the plan. Comments by GEM employees reveal that Gitxaala has not heard about the IRP, has historical grievances with BC Hydro, and views BC Hydro’s procurement practices as “wildcat stuff.” This term was recounted to me on
numerous occasions, particularly in relation to development companies, echoing how BC Hydro functions as seemingly any company in the eyes of many in Gitxaala. Given this context, the ways in which BC Hydro are discussed and conceptualized merge with how development companies are viewed. Both BC Hydro and development companies are viewed with skepticism and the very process of power procurement is seen as arbitrary and unclear. Not only is it likely that numerous First Nations never heard of the IRP, as in Gitxaala’s case, but for those who have, little concerning the IRP seems to be understood. This is far from surprising, given that BC Hydro appears to be grappling with what exactly the IRP will do, its scope, and how it will impact future electricity generation. The IRP adds another level of confusion and frustration – for all involved, including First Nations, energy developers, environmental non-profits, and government – to an already confusing power procurement process and a nascent industry.

Finally, renewable energy funding for BC First Nations hoping to start a project proves elusive. The First Nation Regeneration Fund, the first of its kind in BC, offers financial assistance to First Nations pursuing renewable energy development. Established through a partnership between Tale’awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation, Tribal Resources Investment Corporation, and Ecotrust Canada, it strives to stimulate economies by financing First Nations so they can acquire equity positions in IPP projects. While the organization “lends capital to First Nations that want to acquire ownership in renewable energy projects in BC,” they have in fact only financed stakes in run-of-river power projects (First Nation Regeneration Fund n.d.; pers.
There appears to be greater support for financing run-of-river projects over other renewable energy projects.

The First Nation Clean Energy Business Fund, established in 2011 by BC’s *Clean Energy Act* and operated by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, provides capacity and/or equity funding for First Nation renewable energy projects. To date, the fund has assisted ten BC First Nations. Although the fund’s goal includes financing renewable energy projects, exploring actual funding allocations and types of projects financed shows a different picture. Most First Nations receiving funding obtained sums ranging from $4,600 to $40,000, with the bulk of funding between $20,000-$30,000. These amounts often only cover feasibility studies and are miniscule when discussing renewable energy or wind projects that require billions in funding. Of particular note is the project that received the most money, $500,000: the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation received the maximum amount of funding for a run-of-river hydropower project near Tofino, BC (Province of BC 2013a). This funding disparity between First Nation renewable energy projects calls into question whether renewable energy projects falling outside the Province’s historical interest in hydro will be similarly funded. When examining renewable energy projects established by First Nations, BC government’s financing pattern seems to indicate a lack of commitment in supporting and financing First Nations interested in pursuing renewable energy projects other than hydropower.

The confusion, frustration, and lack of information encountered in attempting to understand the process of starting a renewable energy project are the same concerns about BC renewable energy projects.

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57 Run-of-river projects involve diverting portions of a river’s water through a pipe running parallel to the riverbed and down to a powerhouse. Water is then returned to the stream below the powerhouse. Developers promote run-of-river projects as environmentally responsible ways to generate electricity, and they are promoted as less environmentally damaging than the major dams built by BC Hydro (Calvert 2007:12).
Hydro continually voiced by First Nations. First Nation involvement in BC Hydro is further complicated when investigating BC Hydro’s IRP and when exploring First Nations seeking involvement in renewable energy. First Nations experience numerous barriers in interacting with BC Hydro and in developing their own renewable energy projects. Common complaints include wanting to be more involved in energy procurement and development but encountering significant barriers, confusion with BC Hydro’s power procurement, frustration with a lack of success acquiring Energy Purchase Agreements, changing timelines (e.g., modifications to projects after procurement), historical grievances with BC Hydro, concerns with an absence of consultation, no transparency (in how BC Hydro evaluates bids), lack of guarantee that projects will move forward, and a general level of confusion over how to get involved (BC Hydro 2011; Merrimack 2011). At this point in time, information is fragmented and disorganized, hidden among a myriad of organizations. No one entity is charged with oversight for developing the renewable energy industry and its integration with First Nation communities.

D. Discussion

BC’s renewable energy industry, while holding great potential, suffers a high degree of uncertainty regarding the future of the industry. For IPPs and First Nations alike, renewable energy presents a series of opportunities with a slew of high stakes. Simple questions relating to how to start a project, acquire funding, or BC Hydro’s role present project proponents with a sequence of difficult obstacles to overcome. Furthermore, the instability regarding BC Hydro, its role in meeting future energy demand, and the IRP (in what it will include and how it will affect future development) further confuses matters. BC Hydro’s approach to First Nations and
renewable energies is incredibly fragmented, with little infrastructure to support First Nations seeking involvement. First Nations and IPPs encounter an industry in flux, struggling to make sense of where and how the industry may proceed in the next few years.

First Nations seeking involvement in clean energy development face an unstable situation, making it all the more difficult for First Nations to seriously move forward with renewable energy projects. McRanor reflects on these difficulties:

There’s a lot of things about the bidding process and acquiring water rights and things like that that are very, oh, I don’t know – it’s almost like it creates this kind of ‘gold rush’ mentality, which concerns First Nations because it’s like even though they’re tempering, right, to use a resource, there’s still kind of a right, a competing right, and the First Nations are very concerned about all these folks flooding into their territory to stake their clams, as it were, to develop these clean energy projects (Interview November 1, 2012).

In addition to suffering from a lack of clarity, the process of acquiring power further contributes to a mentality where companies approach First Nations in the hopes of staking their claim to an area. First Nations desiring involvement in the industry encounter an unstable industry that, at this point in time, follows the path of previous development attempts, whether mining, forestry, fisheries, or port development.

In treating renewable energy development in the same manner as previous resource development, First Nations engaging in potential renewable energy development actually take a logical path forward, one that appears to be a natural extension of how they approach other development. While the opportunities for renewable energy development are present, “Hydro is hearing loud and clear that there just aren’t enough resources right now for First Nations when it comes to getting involved” (Shauna McRanor, Interview November 1, 2012). Access to cash, capacity building, and lack of deployment of large-scale renewable energy projects for
successful models to follow remain substantial obstacles (Krupa 2012b:712-713), and when one considers the additional unclear nature of renewable energy development in BC, the path to developing a First Nation-owned or operated renewable energy project is barely navigable.

As frequently recounted to me, First Nations would “love to be” more involved with clean energy development but need assistance. Even without considering BC Hydro’s far from transparent procedures and the rapidly evolving renewable energy industry in BC, First Nations face significant barriers to developing their own renewable energy projects. Not only do First Nations lack equal footing with other IPPs, but they are simultaneously expected to make sense of the unfolding renewable energy industry while BC Hydro fails to support them as proponents of renewable energy projects. While IPPs and private businesses often have the resources and experience in navigating BC Hydro and embarking on such projects, much less is asked of them than of First Nations. First Nations enter the process at a disadvantage when compared to other IPPs. First Nations are left seeking funding, opportunities, and guidance elsewhere while concurrently expected to fulfill their numerous roles as governing bodies, social-service providers, and overseers of their territories. By their nature, other IPPs do not have the same multi-faceted demands placed upon them. Moreover, IPPs can come to the table with experience and resources that some First Nations cannot, for many wind turbine developers have previously been involved in other energy projects either in the province or internationally. While BC Hydro treats these IPPs as project proponents, they simultaneously struggle to find a place for First Nations as project proponents. This structural arrangement begs serious consideration. We must wonder why so much is being demanded of First Nations – while BC Hydro simultaneously struggles to find a place for First Nations as project proponents – while other IPPs have far fewer demands placed upon them and greater resources at their disposal.
SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

A. A Hearing, A June Fishing Trip, and An Abalone Story

The NEB hearings and my time on a fishing boat traveling through Gitxaala Territory reflect similar stories. Both are responses to development. Both stories highlight the degree to which Gitxaala is impeded from living in their territory, yet the stories unfold in divergent ways. Watching the NEB hearings in Prince Rupert progress, the controlled structure of the event surfaced. Boundaries filled the room. Grouped in discrete sections, hearing observers were easily distinguished and divided. In the back were members of Gitxaala Nation, to the side were Enbridge lawyers, and the front of the room consisted of the NEB Joint Review Panel, lawyers for Gitxaala, and those called upon to speak. Relegated to the side were various hereditary leaders. Literally and figuratively, Gitxaala was pushed to the margins. The controlled nature of the event emerged throughout the proceedings. ‘Evidence’ was presented, a strict schedule adhered to, and on numerous occasions, hearing observers were told to be quiet. Gitxaala Nation was limited to presenting ‘evidence’ without disclosing opinions. Those presenting on the panels were often told to speak into the microphone or repeat what they had said. Maps were frequently used as a key piece of ‘evidence,’ ‘proving’ Gitxaala’s continued presence in the region. These maps were treated as passive, seemingly neutral pieces that depicted a silent space, rather than an active, social space, as important today as thousands of years ago.

Contrasting this experience, the June fishing trip in Gitxaala Territory revealed an active space. Simply moving throughout the territory, I could feel an ease not experienced at the NEB hearings; people were able to move about, joke, fish, and tell stories. While constrained in some respects, the same constraints as at the NEB hearings were not placed upon Gitxaala. By existing in their own territory, Gitxaala are able to both substantiate and extend their continued
place and history. As the *Northern Monarch* navigated through the complex waterways of Gitxaala Territory, the fluidity of the ship’s journey through the waters and territory seemed to mirror the ways in which Gitxaala Nation navigates encroachments on their territory. Moreover, the trip throughout Gitxaala Territory can be understood as an act of sovereignty, one initiated by Gitxaala to continue traditions and culture, reassert place and identity, and resist restrictions placed upon them.

Gitxaala as a community and culture endures. Enbridge, LNG facilities, port expansions, and now renewable energies are part of a long list of pressures facing Gitxaala. Yet, they continue to harvest and distribute their food, utilize their territory and voice their political power, transmit knowledge, maintain traditions, and navigate their way through colonial government policies. In pursuing a wind farm development on their own, Gitxaala are creating their own pathway. However, they face a series of obstacles that significantly impede this potential pathway, and they confront policies that restrict their involvement.

Returning to the abalone story aids in contemplating wind turbine development in Gitxaala Nation. The abalone story – where a government-sponsored abalone research project in Gitxaala led to the appearance of commercial dive boats and the subsequent closure of the abalone fishery by DFO – continues to be felt by Gitxaala (Menzies 2004). Gitxaala’s experience with abalone depicts the ways in which they have historically been disenfranchised and betrayed by government and industry, but it also portrays how Gitxaala continues in the face of these practices. The abalone story is all around. Enbridge’s NGP is the abalone story. Wind turbines in Gitxaala could be the abalone story. Yet, development does not have to be the story of the abalone. Leaving Gitxaala, I am left with the same question: will wind turbine
development unfold just as the abalone story unfolded? Gitxaala Nation will pursue a project in a manner they deem fit, one that adheres to cultural values and one done in a sustainable way. Is this opportunity any different than similar ‘opportunities’ they have experienced? It remains to be seen. However, the question of government and industry remains. Will they play the same role in the wind turbine story as they did in the abalone story?

B. Emergent Questions

Undoubtedly, the global threat of climate change is an important issue facing the world, with renewable energies touted as one possible mechanism in combatting climate change. Renewable energy projects engage with broader discussions surrounding global climate change discourse, development, and energy production. Wind turbines, the fastest growing renewable energy technology, possess great potential. Their upsurge also coincides with discussions of First Nation interest in such renewable energy projects. Often, First Nations’ interest in renewable energy projects is assumed, as is the view that such projects and partnerships are desired, provide benefits to First Nations, align with traditional values, and are key in fighting climate change. Renewable energies do provide an opportunity for First Nations. Renewable energy development on indigenous lands can engage with and respond to histories of regulation and state-driven models of controlling people, resources, and land. Dana Powell argues that renewable energies symbolize alternatives and function as technologies of resistance to dominant models of development:

[Renewable energy technologies] embody an alternative knowledge grounded in an historical, indigenous social movement in which economic justice for indigenous peoples is intimately intermeshed with questions of ecological wellness and cultural preservation. As such, wind and solar technologies are being
presented and implemented as alternative approaches to dominant practices of economic development and carry with them a history of centuries of struggle, as well as the hope for a better future (2006:126).

Such renewable energies, if embedded in broader movements, do pose an opportunity for driving both social movements and unconventional development pathways. Powell also claims that renewable energies are sophisticated hybrids, where knowledge of wider energy markets, science, local resource management issues, global processes of climate change, and the relational knowledge that comes with attachments to place converge to inform and generate a call for environmental justice implemented through specific material technologies (2006:131). While this may be true, the push for renewable energy development must be carefully examined.

On the North Coast of British Columbia, questions remain regarding who renewable energy projects may benefit and whether the communities in which these projects are sited desire them. While renewable energy technologies may function as ‘technologies of resistance,’ this can only be the case if such projects are conceptualized and implemented by the communities themselves, rather than from outside companies or governmental imposition. When pushed from outside such communities, the indigenous voice is often missing from discussions. It is of prime importance for government agencies and corporate entities to explore and include First Nation priorities, especially if the provincial government hopes to meet its 2016 goal of energy self-sufficiency. Such projects are poised to have significant impact, both environmentally and culturally, on the communities in which they are sited, and recognition and incorporation of indigenous views is fundamental to ensure that developments are “culturally sustainable,

58 See, for example, the efforts of the Rosebud Sioux in starting the US’s first utility-scale and indigenous-owned and operated wind project (Tidwell 2003).
respectful of indigenous rights, and supportive of indigenous ways of life” (Butler and Menzies 2007:27). Furthermore, First Nation inclusion is necessary for success in wind turbine development on BC’s North Coast. Developers and industry proponents must actively engage with indigenous perspectives such as Gitxaala’s, but such conversations might help to transform some of Gitxaala Nation’s views regarding wind turbine development in their territory.

Gitxaala Nation has a long history of adapting to and taking advantage of opportunities. Wind turbine development is no different; Gitxaala hopes to develop a wind farm and is currently exploring options. The potential exists for such a ‘technology of resistance’ in Gitxaala Nation, but it faces a series of government and industry barriers. First Nations in British Columbia face an unstable, shifting renewable energy industry that can barely keep its head above water. Greater transparency, opportunities for funding, assistance for First Nations desiring to be involved, and First Nation only power calls are just a few changes necessary if the government is serious about supporting First Nations in renewable energy development in BC and Canada.

As explored elsewhere (Butler and Menzies 2007; Menzies and Butler 2008), Gitxaala Nation has been critical in both the rise and success of industries such as fishing, and they were critical players in adapting to and challenging the rise of industrial resource capitalism. As scarce resources on the North Coast diminish, a similar scenario occurs, where Gitxaala continues to adapt to and challenge the rise of industrial resource development. Governments and their business partners seek to develop and control another resource. However, Gitxaala and other First Nations are critical to the story, in both the success of renewable energy in the region and as active players resisting and taking advantage of new opportunities. By seeking to develop
their own wind turbine project in the face of continued wind farm attempts imposed from the outside, Gitxaala Nation continues to resist. Gitxaala Nation can and should provide the foundation for any wind turbine development in their territory. By doing so, wind turbine development can become, in the words of Dana Powell (2006), a technology of resistance, functioning as a reassertion of rights.

For Gitxaala Nation, the stakes are high. Wind turbine development in Gitxaala Territory materializes as an extension of industrial development on the North Coast. A recent threat, the NGP, influences how members of Gitxaala Nation understand the potential for wind farms. Such associations with the NGP indicate the ways in which renewable energy is understood as servicing the larger energy infrastructure, one intertwined with oil development. Gitxaala’s reception reveals how they are responding to a suite of projects and forces, those of industrial resource extraction. Moreover, it reveals how Gitxaala is able to understand the larger landscape of energy development in the region and its linkages to past practices. Their response begs the question, how are renewable energy projects actually contributing to BC’s clean energy targets in reducing climate change and at whose expense?

In detailing and situating Gitxaala’s reception to potential wind turbine introduction, the research offers a contextualization of renewable energy in British Columbia, one that has implications for Gitxaala, as well as for communities and indigenous groups worldwide. Implications for development from an indigenous lens are differently configured, further emphasizing the importance of including an indigenous voice in the discussion but also reiterating the need to investigate and incorporate indigenous priorities in development. As outlined in this research, the institutional obstacles facing Gitxaala and other First Nations
hoping to initiate their own renewable energy project are extreme, highlighting the need for change in government agencies such as BC Hydro. Not only is Gitxaala expected to fulfill the various roles demanded of it (such as providing education and social services, governing Gitxaala, and overseeing their path forward), but it is also expected to be a proponent. Gitxaala and other First Nations in BC are expected to be project proponents, competing against companies with far deeper pockets and resources at their disposal. Furthermore, the expectations and demands placed about First Nations occurs in a system that continues to treat First Nations as victims while BC Hydro struggles to find a place for them.

Shining a light on the details of renewable energy development in Gitxaala, it is hoped that a greater appreciation for the varying contexts and cultural sensibilities will be taken into account when contemplating renewable energies. By doing so, potential alternative trajectories may be identified. In any case, many questions remain. In considering renewable energy development in Gitxaala or other communities, it is easy to think of such projects as new opportunities contributing to fighting global climate change. It is important to ask, how is renewable energy mobilized by particular groups to facilitate certain goals? Additionally, can BC Hydro make space for First Nations as proponents? What space exists for meaningful involvement by First Nations? In asking what is new about these renewable energy projects, perhaps the more important question really is, what is the same?
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Maps of Proposed Wind Farm Sites

Naikun Wind Farm Proposed Site:

Source: Naikun 2010
http://www.naikun.ca/the_project/project_site.php
Banks Island Wind Farm Proposed Site:

Source: Province of BC. 2011. Project Information Center (e-PIC).
For a larger version see: http://a100.gov.bc.ca/appndata/epic/documents/p292/1211995348924_8e248a8d30d974e3cde7506844cf6b3818beb1889bb0c.pdf
Mount MacDonal Wind Farm Proposed Site:

Source: Province of BC. 2011. Project Information Center (e-PIC). For a larger version see: http://a100.gov.bc.ca/appsdata/epic/documents/p344/d31736/1258414150226_3322f8bce8e224b3bb6aaca84dd830854846d39e6e80f2c3b5501474abecadff.PDF
Appendix B: Diagram of a Horizontal Axis Wind Turbine

Source: How Stuff Works n.d.
http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/wind-power.htm/printable