

# EPIC

## Energy Peers in Indigenous Communities



## Malahat First Nation



Malahat Community Energy Champion George Harry (left) and EPIC Program Lead, Kevin Good (right) in front of a storage shed with roof solar. The community is doing extensive work on solar power, including for its main administrative building, and is advancing work on other renewable energy sources. | Photo credit: Sybil Zhang

Malahat First Nation is strategically enhancing economic security, community services and governance through focused economic development initiatives on the Malahat Lands.

To navigate challenges, Malahat is innovating through the exploration and integration of renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and biofuel, coordinated via an intelligent microgrid system. This advanced system enhances energy independence and resilience, allowing for precise management of energy resources while reducing operational costs. The adoption of energy storage solutions such as batteries and pumped storage further bolsters the community's energy strategy.

Through its participation in the EPIC program, Malahat Nation is shaping its energy future, driving economic resilience and championing sustainable development. The EPIC program has supported Community Energy Champion (CEC), former Chief George Harry, through specialized training in energy project management. The program also facilitates access to consultant support, building the community's capacity to manage complex projects.

These steps underscore a strategic opportunity for funders and partners to invest in and support Malahat Nation's ambitious energy vision and its journey toward sustainability and economic sovereignty.

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### Indigenous-led Gigafactory

Malahat Nation is poised to host Canada's first Indigenous-led gigafactory on Vancouver Island, which will be dedicated to assembling various types of battery packs, including Lithium Iron Phosphate batteries for multiple applications. This innovative 100,000 square foot facility aims to foster grid resilience and sustainability through advanced battery storage solutions.



The Nation plans to manufacture batteries for both commercial and residential applications | Photo credit: Malahat First Nation

This venture, predominantly Indigenous-led and comprising 51% of the production stake, will not only focus on battery manufacturing but will explore emerging technologies such as Sodium-ion and Solid State Batteries. The overarching goal is to establish a scalable model for energy resilience in First Nations communities. George Harry's involvement in the EPIC program has facilitated his professional development, notably through a project management course from ECO Canada, which enhances his capacity to oversee significant developments.



An illustrative rendering of Malahat's planned battery factory | Photo credit: Malahat First Nation

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### Solar For All

The Malahat First Nation is advancing towards energy independence by installing a solar energy system at its administration building. This project involves multiple pilot studies, including the use of Shift energy-storage systems on land that can significantly reduce carbon emissions and enhance the community's sustainability.

Once the installation is complete, the administration building is expected to be capable of running off-grid at nearly full capacity.



Malahat's community building with roof solar installation | Photo credit: Sybil Zhang

### Funding for a Cleaner Future

In his role as a CEC, George Harry facilitated key funding applications. His efforts helped secure \$150,000 from the British Columbia Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) to fund renewable energy projects, including solar power installations and energy storage solutions for community buildings. Further funding was accessed through the First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund (FNCEBF) for installing heat pumps in priority homes, conducting an energy assessment of the band office, and evaluating the feasibility of rooftop solar photovoltaic systems.