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Title: The Odd Couple: The Suprising Success of BC's Utility and Local Government Partnerships

Abstract: For over a decade, BC Hydro (the electricity utility in British Columbia) has been building capacity within BC local governments to support climate and energy policy action. This marriage of utility demand side management expertise, and local government touch-points, has resulted in remarkable policy innovation, including the BC Energy Step Code, electric vehicle charging requirements for new construction, and advanced building code compliance.   For example, within a year of the Energy Step Code becoming available to BC local governments, 26 adopted it, making up 70% of all Building Permits in BC. This uptake has enabled the Province to set a roadmap for BC Building Code changes in 2022, 2027, and 2032. This presentation provides a retrospective on the heart of the BC Hydro - local government partnership - the Community Energy Manager Network. The Network includes 12-15 full-time positions that BC Hydro co-funds within different local governments. These Community Energy Managers deliver on internal policy work programs, and then outreach to 100+ local governments, industry associations, and senior government partners to drive widespread policy action. Key lessons reviewed include: 1. The role of local government partnerships to advance utility Demand Side Management programs (including codes and standards). 2. The key skillsets, tools, and influences that utilities and local governments possess, and the strengths of combining these through partnerships. 3. How to segment the local government market, to provide appropriate policy support for different sized local governments 4. Triangulating industry, utility and government support - through networking with Professional Associations (eg homebuilders associations, building officials, architects, engineers etc). 5. Techniques to generate an agile, learning lab environment to create "just in time" policy solutions 6. Tips for successful policy uptake - keeping it simple (but technically rigorous)