



Regional Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

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BACKGROUND

The Life in the Heartland Regional Advisory Committee (LITH RAC) was established by Life in the Heartland in 2022. The committee is a volunteer forum for the open and transparent exchange of information and for discussing issues related to industrial operations in the Industrial Heartland region of Alberta.

The role of the public members is to provide an external, critical perspective on topics primarily related to safety, environmental impacts, and other topics of importance to communities and stakeholders in the region. The public members also perform an essential function by alerting LITH members to emerging topics.

MANDATE

The LITH RAC is an externally facilitated committee of public representatives with a mandate to:

- 1) Sensitize LITH members to public concerns related to industry operations in the Industrial Heartland region of Alberta.
- 2) Review and provide input on questions raised through company presentations and hot-topic discussions.
- 3) Review and provide input on LITH programs and communications initiatives.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) The LITH RAC was established to maintain an ongoing dialogue that fosters an effective working relationship between the public and industry through continuous engagement and communication.
- 2) The committee will encourage respectful discussion between industry, public members, and interested stakeholders.
- 3) The committee will be encouraged to engage in discussion and provide feedback that can contribute valuable insight into continuous improvement initiatives by local industry and offer a public perspective and considerations when making decisions about local operations.
- 4) Identify opportunities for enhanced information, dialogue, and improved relations between industrial members and the public. Specifically, provide perspectives on such topics as:
 - Public information needs
 - Issues related to safe operations and the safeguarding of the public
 - Interpretation of regional public opinion data from a local perspective
 - Risk perception and emergency response
 - Other themes related to the broad category of living safely with the many industrial sectors represented across the region may be brought forward.

COMMITTEE GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Life in the Heartland's (LITH) Regional Advisory Committee's primary role is to offer a free and unfettered exchange of information and ideas in an advisory capacity on information, issues, and initiatives presented in meetings. Committee members are expected to actively participate in discussions, ask questions about industry, make suggestions, and bring public concerns to the conversations.

The role of the LITH RAC is to act as an advisory group and not a decision-making body. However, committee members' opinions shall be relayed and considered by the industry members and corporate levels. As decisions are taken at industry sites, the company leaders may share with the committee how their suggestions have been used to influence their decision-making, or industry may share why particular advice or guidance could not be implemented.

Industry companies are also expected to actively participate in meetings. An industry member may consider incorporating public members' input where appropriate and invite them to join in further activities when it is believed their participation would be beneficial, and the committee members' schedules support them attending.

- a. The committee meets three times per year, face-to-face.
- b. LITH reserves the right to request a special meeting of the committee if there are industrial activities that require public input.

The committee meetings are run by an independent facilitator contracted by LITH. It is the Facilitator's responsibility to ensure proper notice of meetings and to distribute to committee members information pertinent to the meetings as expeditiously as possible.

Minutes are taken by LITH staff, and summaries of meetings will be shared with committee members and will also be posted on LITH's website.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Composition

Leadership: Leadership for this group will be directed by LITH and its partner organizations: Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA), Heartland Air Monitoring Partnership (HAMP), Northeast Capital Industry Association (NCIA), and Northeast Region Community Awareness Emergency Response (NR CAER).

Industry: The LITH RAC shall be composed of industry organizations with representatives from each participating company. Companies will appear before the committee based on operational activities and initiatives. The LITH Community Engagement Director and the Facilitator will coordinate company participation.

Public Members: The public members shall reflect a cross-section of the surrounding Heartland communities and their residents. Public members will represent a diverse selection of volunteers with the background and experience to assist LITH in obtaining a broader understanding of the needs and concerns of the public.

Committee members do not officially represent the stakeholder organization or interests from which they are drawn but instead agree to present their personal views. Members are encouraged to bring forward any concerns of friends, neighbours, or greater public associates. No one is expected to defend, endorse, or support industry actions.

Public Member Selection: LITH Regional Advisory Committee public members shall be selected by LITH and its leadership. Applicants for the volunteer public member role are invited to meet with the LITH Community Engagement Director and submit a letter of interest for consideration.

Facilitator: A Facilitator external to LITH will be hired to facilitate the conversation, support agenda development, and encourage an inclusive conversation. The Facilitator will also track emerging issues discussed and retain an Issues List and matrix of potential "Hot Topic" discussions. The Facilitator will administer a survey at the end of each meeting to identify areas of improvement.

Guests: Advance approval from the LITH Community Engagement Director is needed for any people/groups who are not LITH leadership, industry, or public committee members to attend meetings. This includes people/groups presenting, speaking, or wishing to participate in a meeting at the request of industry or public members. These requests will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the topic of relevance for that meeting. Guests are asked to depart after their presentation.

Resources

Other organizations and individuals may act as resources and be called on to support the LITH Regional Advisory Committee, including Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA), Heartland Air Monitoring Partnership (HAMP), Northeast Capital Industry Association (NCIA), and Northeast Region Community Awareness Emergency Response (NR CAER), and others as appropriate.

New Member Orientation Package

An orientation package will be provided to new public and industry members. This package will include a copy of the LITH Regional Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, LITH leadership information, previous meeting minutes, summaries, and survey results, where applicable.

Attendance

Attendance is vital to the functioning of the committee. If a public member misses two consecutive meetings, the LITH Community Engagement Director will initiate an offline conversation to determine the difficulty in attending. Industry members should have a process that designates alternates if the regular representative is unavailable. Should an industry member not send any delegates to two consecutive meetings, the LITH Community Engagement Director will initiate an offline conversation to determine if that industry still wishes to maintain its participation.

Attendance is taken at each meeting, and a review will be conducted annually. If an attendance concern is determined at that time, the LITH Community Engagement Director will again initiate a conversation or follow up with a letter requesting a resignation.

Public Membership Duration

It is the expectation that a LITH Regional Advisory Committee public member will serve a minimum three-year term and attend the three regularly scheduled meetings. Meetings will be scheduled for the first Wednesday in February, June, and October unless otherwise specified.

Resignations

A member may resign by written resignation to the LITH Community Engagement Director.

Remuneration

Members shall not receive monetary compensation for their participation on the committee.

LITH will offer reimbursement of mileage, reflective of the current CRA allowance rate, for public members travelling to and from meetings. An expense claim form will need to be completed and submitted to the LITH Community Engagement Director to receive reimbursement.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The LITH RAC strives for consensus in their decision-making, but that consensus does not mean unanimity. If an agreement is necessary and the committee has reached an impasse, the discussion will go to dispute resolution with a third-party mediator. The dispute resolution process will involve the Facilitator and committee representatives convening a meeting with the LITH Community Engagement Director to discuss a reasonable outcome.

RELATIONSHIP WITH LITH

The Community Engagement Director or their delegate represents LITH at the RAC meetings. The Community Engagement Director will be the primary communications channel between the committee, LITH, industry, and leadership. The Facilitator's role is to allow complete freedom of expression of views and opinions while focusing on the committee's purpose and objectives as described in the Terms of Reference.

AGENDA DEVELOPMENT

The LITH Community Engagement Director and Facilitator will manage the development of the agenda in consultation with the LITH RAC. Any committee member wishing to propose an agenda item should contact the LITH Community Engagement Director. The agenda will be issued two weeks before the meeting. Industry members may include supplementary documents to help prepare committee members for in-person discussions.

MINUTES

A record of committee meetings will be prepared by LITH staff and distributed to committee members and LITH leadership. Comments made by committee members at meetings will not be attributed to the minutes.

There is no formal process for the adoption of minutes. Errors and omissions in the minutes should be reported directly to the LITH Community Engagement Director to be updated. When there is consensus on an issue before the committee, that fact will be noted explicitly at the meeting and in the minutes; otherwise, it should be assumed that there is a range of views around the table on the topic under discussion. The committee will not engage in a voting process to reach a consensus.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

LITH is responsible for the control of the committee information and all associated documents. Public and industry members' contact information and all meeting documents will be stored securely on a password-protected digital platform.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF TOR AND OBJECTIVES

The LITH RAC and LITH leadership will review these Terms of Reference and approve any changes annually.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

The existence of the committee is a matter of public record. Names of committee members are made known to the public as a matter of information, but are not used by LITH in any endorsement process without specific permission.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DISCUSSION

Committee discussions are not confidential unless so designated beforehand. Comments made by committee members will not be attributed in the minutes, and committee members undertake to respect that confidentiality when speaking with persons who are not members of the committee.

The content of comments is open to discussion with anyone at any time, and industry members should make that fact explicit when confidential matters are brought before the committee. Persons unwilling to respect the confidentiality of the item in question will leave the room for the duration of that discussion.