

CER's OPR Review – ‘What We Heard Report’

The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) recently released its report on the first phase of engagement on improving the regulatory framework for onshore pipelines. Much of the input from this initial phase was focused on the potential renewal of the Onshore Pipeline Regulations (OPR), which guides how CER-regulated companies must operate, including requirements for management systems. Here is a link to the CER's report: [OPR Review - What We Heard](#)

Highlights from the Report:

The OPR “What We Heard” report focuses on five key topics:

1. Indigenous reconciliation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
2. Increasing Indigenous involvement in pipeline lifecycle oversight
3. Improving clarity and transparency of terms and communication
4. Enhancing competitiveness
5. Enhancing guidance and improving how the OPR is implemented.

The first two topics, focused on Indigenous reconciliation and involvement, are heavily included throughout the report, and both industry and Indigenous participants positively contributed to this focus. We can expect this to be prominent in the CER's focus and is reflected in the [CER Strategic Plan](#).

The final three topics address, at least in part, operational issues that we often hear from our CER-regulated client companies. The words in **bold italics** within the following quotes extracted from the CER report point to potential improvements that we may hope to see as the multi-year OPR review process moves ahead:

- Improving clarity and transparency highlights “**define terms, improve communication**, and share information with regulated companies, Indigenous Peoples and interested parties.”
- Enhancing competitiveness includes “incorporate **flexibility and scalability** into regulatory requirements without compromising safety, security and environmental protection, and **pursue opportunities for jurisdictional alignment**.”
- Enhancing guidance on how the OPR is implemented involves “**supplement rules for regulated companies with guidance, improve audit and compliance verification processes**, and coordinate updates to relevant filing requirements.”

Final Thoughts and Next Steps

The CER heard from many Indigenous Nations and communities, industry associations, regulated companies and other interested parties. We did find it somewhat surprising that only eight regulated companies participated in the first phase of the consultation directly and would like to **highlight the great opportunity for companies to [get involved](#) to potentially influence this important legislation which affects how regulated companies do business**. SPAN encourages our clients to review the report and consider how they might participate going forward.

CER will post updates on its [CER Dialogue web page](#). You can also contact the CER with feedback questions or comments on the report at opr-rpt@cer-rec.gc.ca.