

## Preliminary Summary of Public Feedback

### Elements of Consent

- **Informed Consent:** Individuals should fully understand relevant details, potential impacts, and risks involved when making decisions with accessible information, transparent communication, and community-wide agreement.
- **Determining Consent:** Consent may be expressed through approaches, such as elected representatives or a direct vote. Attempts should be made for general agreement among community members. While 100% consensus may be difficult to achieve, a majority rule should be the baseline, with a higher threshold for significant decisions.
- **Engagement:** To achieve meaningful consent, it is crucial to foster inclusive engagement that prioritizes accessible information, ongoing communication, education, and diverse outreach, ensuring all community voices are heard and respected.
- **Community Concerns:** Community concerns should be taken seriously and actively addressed. Consent is influenced by trust in the individuals or institutions involved.
- **Veto Power and Change:** A consent-based process should encompass the ability to veto decisions. Some recommended that consent should be revisited periodically to ensure ongoing community agreement and to adapt to changing circumstances.
- **Long-Term Factors and Scale:** For projects with long-term and widespread impacts, consent should consider multiple generations, technology change, legacy impacts, and neighboring communities.

### Decision-Making Process

- **Broad Representation:** The decision-making process should involve all who will be affected (e.g., local communities, tribes, businesses and officials, industry workers, environmental groups, government agencies, neighboring communities, and communities along the transport corridor). Efforts should be made to ensure diverse voices are heard. Youth and future generations should be considered as they will live with the long-term impacts.
- **Accessibility:** Decision-making should be open and accessible to all community members with each having an opportunity to weigh in. Public meetings should be held at times and locations that are convenient for community members.
- **Process:** Clear rules and guidelines should be established with transparent and accountable voting processes, plus transparent points of engagement and feedback. A direct vote of eligible voters may be the most effective way to hear from the community. The process may entail reaching a consensus or a large majority to ensure the decision reflects the community's will.
- **Local Autonomy:** Communities should define their own decision-making process, ensuring alignment with their priorities/values/culture. Some indicated that residents living near the project site, long-term residents, and individuals who are most at risk should be prioritized.
- **Integrating Expert and Community Knowledge:** Expert and community knowledge should be integrated into the process, with key community representatives holding leadership roles in the process.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Communities along relevant aquifers, as well as local farmers, ranchers, and those with environmental concerns should be represented in decision-making. Some indicated that the project should consider potential impacts on wildlife and ecosystems.

## Elements of Informed Decisions

- **Risks and Benefits:** Residents need to understand the potential hazards, national security risks, health effects, and safety implications, as well as the benefits, economic impacts, and long-term implications of a choice.
- **Information:** To make informed decisions, stakeholders need accessible, unbiased, and transparent information. Information should be clear and easy to understand, avoiding technical jargon. Efforts should be made to implement mechanisms to identify and address misinformation and give communities access to resources, independent expertise, and decision-making tools.
- **Lessons Learned:** Incorporate insights from individuals with direct experience in similar projects to draw best practices and make more informed decisions.
- **Ongoing Engagement:** Establish a framework for ongoing engagement and allow for the revisiting of consent in future energy planning.

## Additional Considerations

- **Cultural and Historical Considerations:** Consent processes should be respectful of culture, local priorities, and historical experience. Processes must consider fairness issues, particularly in communities with past negative experiences.
- **Risk Communication:** Communicate risks transparently, addressing both perceived and actual risks. Communication should be free of evasive or disproportionately promotional language and information should be provided by diverse sources.
- **Education:** Impartial and neutral education from a variety of independent sources will be essential for communities to make informed decisions about complex issues. Ensure that all involved have access to clear and comprehensive information about the project.
- **Fairness:** Decisions must be made ethically, considering fairness and the well-being of all stakeholders, with mechanisms in place to hold decision-makers accountable.
- **Iterative and Adaptive Process:** Consent and decision-making processes should be flexible and allow for changes over time, including (according to some) the ability to revisit, revise, and revoke previous decisions. Ongoing feedback mechanisms should ensure the process remains dynamic and responsive to community concerns and changing conditions.
- **Long-term Accountability:** Processes should ensure ongoing responsibility for the project's impacts, including considerations for future generations and technological changes. Thoughtful consideration must be given to age restrictions for participation in the decision-making process.
- **Incentives:** Carefully calibrated incentives could encourage broader participation, but (if used) should be done in a way that does not compromise the integrity of the engagement process.