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Interview With Mike Hopkins, CEO of Bakken Midstream, Lead Director of Plus Power, and Previously Long-time CEO of Ice Energy

Battery + Storage Podcast

SPEAKERS

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In Episode 2, the Troutman Pepper Battery + Storage Podcast team interviews Mike Hopkins, CEO of Bakken Midstream, who is, objectively, destined for immortality on “Storage Mt. Rushmore;” (2:40), (although, as he adamantly tells the team, he is still, very much “alive”). While focusing on storage, Mike provides a 360 degree view of the evolution of North American energy markets including his intimate background with the Canadian natural gas industry in Alberta (6:30), and how that experience shaped his thoughts about the role of government and regulatory intervention in markets (in particular, with respect to California’s involvement in fostering the in-state battery and storage markets) (16:00). He says that if government intervention is required they should “...as soon as possible, return to what I would think of as normal regulatory policy which is about ensuring that resources are fully valued and the value is efficiently extracted.”

The podcast covers how the Energy Storage Act in California was revolutionary for storage, taking the asset from an R&D concept to the facilitator of a tradable commodity. We hear about Mike’s experience as a first-mover storage proponent with Ice Energy in SCE’s revolutionary 2014 all-source RFP, his views on the future of project finance and PPAs for battery resources, his views on how battery project development is funded in 2019 (and investor risk assessments of the same efforts), the future of repeatable C&I battery deployment (like rooftop solar), the importance of communication and control systems on the distribution grid to facilitate commercial values (and the need for price transparency), the necessity of reflecting customer demand in product development, and details regarding ICE Energy’s storage technology and its market success.

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