

ENVIRONMENT POLICY IN BRIEF

British Columbia Brownfields Renewal Strategy

The Province recently announced \$588,000 in funding under the Brownfield Renewal Funding Program for brownfield sites throughout British Columbia, including sites in Victoria, Port Alberni, Ladysmith, Fernie, and New Westminster. To date, approximately \$1.6 million in funding has been provided under the program. For more information on the Brownfield Renewal Strategy, visit www.brownfieldrenewal.gov.bc.ca.

Climate Action

In the summer of 2007, UBCM and the Province developed a non-binding Climate Action Charter aimed at fostering collaborative relations for reducing greenhouse gases. The Charter commits local government signatories to: becoming carbon neutral in their operations by 2012; measuring and reporting on their GHG emissions profile; and creating complete, compact, more energy efficient rural and urban communities. To date, 176 local governments have provided UBCM with signed copies of the Climate Action Charter, while several other local governments have notified UBCM of their intent to sign the Charter.

For further information on the process for signing the charter, please contact Jared Wright, Senior Policy Analyst by email at jwright@civicnet.bc.ca, or by phone at 604-270-8226 ext.113.

Cleaner Gasoline Regulation

The Ministry of Environment intends to amend the Cleaner Gasoline Regulation (CGR) under the Environmental Management Act. This *Act*, which was brought into force in its current form on July 8, 2004, is designed to provide a flexible authorization framework, increase enforcement options and use modern environmental management tools to protect human health and the quality of water, land and air in British Columbia.

The proposed amendment to the CGR will address two issues: allowing for the distribution of automotive ethanol fuel (E85) in B.C., as well as phasing out the Reid Vapour Pressure (RVP) waiver, which allows ethanol-blended gasoline in the Lower Fraser Valley (LFV) to exceed the prescribed limits for vapour pressure during warmer months of the year.

The Ministry posted an intentions paper for the proposed amendments in August 2009. Following a review of stakeholder comments, the Ministry has since updated its intentions, specifically with respect to the vapour pressure requirements. These revised intentions have been posted at the Ministry's website at www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/codes/cgra/index.htm. The Ministry is also proposing to have the amendments take effect in Spring of 2010 as opposed to January 2010 as originally planned.

Wood Residue Burner and Incineration Regulation

The British Columbia Ministry of Environment ("the Ministry") intends to amend the Wood Residue and Incinerator Regulation and repeal the Rebate of Waste Management Fees Regulation, both of which are under the *Environmental Management Act*. The ministry's primary objective is to amend the regulation to include a final shut down date for all remaining beehive burners in British Columbia. The ministry's objectives and the proposed contents of the amendment to the Wood Residue



Environment

Building Communities with Renewable Energy

BC communities and renewable energy walk hand-in-hand. "Investments made today in established renewable energy technologies can reduce building operating costs, the savings of which can be allocated [for instance] to community programs." Municipal buildings are ideally suited, as they are built for the long-term with quality and durability, and social and environmental responsibility in mind.

Renewable energy systems such as GeoExchange (geothermal heat pumps) and Solar Hot Water ("Solar") are common renewable energy technologies used in commercial scale buildings. They are durable, proven, and low maintenance. GeoExchange harnesses the vast, low-temperature solar radiation stored in the earth's surface layer to provide ultra-efficient, and emission-free heating and cooling for buildings. Solar captures the sun's radiation throughout the year (yes, even on cloudy winter days), and excels in applications such as swimming pools and domestic water heating. GeoExchange systems consume up to 75% less energy than their conventional counterparts, and solar systems consume a staggering 99% less energy. These renewable energy systems have a lifetime of 20-30 years that lend municipally owned buildings a solid economic and "future-proofed" advantage.

In June this year, the Renewable Energy retrofit of the Meadow Park Sports Centre in Whistler was featured in local Pique Newsmagazine. Mr. Ted Battiston, Strategic Energy and Emissions Manager for the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), refers to the combined GeoExchange and Solar retrofit as "a very strong business case". Long after the simple payback-on-investment of only four years, the municipality will own and reap the benefits of the energy produced at the facility.

While traditional building energy upgrades target payback periods of less than five years, renewable energy systems provide much greater, long-term benefits. To best appreciate this, it is recommended that they are evaluated by their lifecycle energy cost, usually in \$/kWh. A solar pool system may produce

energy starting at \$0.02 per kilowatt-hour (kWhr) for 30 years after purchase—this is already more competitive than today's electricity costs of \$0.077 per kWhr. As a Climate Action Charter community, RMOW's retrofit project fulfills their environmental and economic commitment to sustainability. Mr. Battiston says, "We want to make reductions before we have to buy offsets".

Earlier this year, the Quesnel Arts and Recreation Centre also had a rooftop solar system installed. Facility Manager Gary Stuart explains in an interview with SolarBC, "I just finished a tour up to the roof. It's minus 25 out and we're bringing in 150 degree water!" Municipalities that undertake solar retrofit projects today, have access to more than 50% in grants from SolarBC and ecoENERGY.

Buildings that are well suited for solar are commonly aquatic centres, fire halls, hotels, apartment buildings and co-operatives—preliminarily due their vast hot water heating needs. GeoExchange is an energy source of choice to a wide variety of buildings, however site- and building-specific conditions will determine the design options and their economics.

Despite their versatility and adaptability, any renewable energy system must be properly planned in order to maximize benefits. A feasibility study can examine design options, system sizes, economics and associated benefits. It provides a learning opportunity, and a strong foundation and support for any retrofit or new construction project. Drawing from such knowledge, quality decisions can be made today that help municipalities create vibrant, attractive and resilient communities for the future.

Richard Siegenthaler is a Renewable Energy Specialist with Hemmera, a BC-based environmental and renewable energy consulting firm. For more information, contact Richard at 604-669-0424 or rsiegenthaler@hemmera.com, or visit www.hemmera.com.

Burner and Incinerator Regulation along with the rationale for proposing the repeal of the Rebate of Waste Management Fees Regulation are provided in a policy intentions paper for consultation. This intentions paper is available for review on the Ministry's website at www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/codes/wrbir/index.htm.

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