

## 1. Meetings with Minister of EMPR and with BC Hydro

*Speaking notes:*

- *The SOP and Micro-SOP programs have been indefinitely suspended as of February 2019*
- *No new applications are being accepted*
- *BC Hydro has surplus power and the market does not support purchases of higher priced power*
- *The Province does not want to increase energy rates and is wary of purchasing unneeded and more costly energy*
- *We all have to be off hydrocarbon fuels sources by 2050 (including LNG, RNG, other carbon-based fuels)*
- *Communities are making plans now for the near-term future in their asset management plans which includes the infrastructure required now to meet these commitments by 2050.*
- *Communities are inadvertently being forced towards choices that are not in line with the science, their emission goals and targets, or with their financial means due in part to current policy from the Province and BC Hydro.*

*To expand, there are two levels which we see impact to the District of Highlands, at both the community scale and at the regional government scale. Undoubtedly the same situation is faced across the province.*

### *At the community level:*

*At the community level we have a land base that does not provide good solar real-estate for all those who wish to incorporate solar (e.g. trees, north facing slopes). Just as residents in the community were looking at developing a solar farm, wherein they could invest in solar to offset their own energy usage at home, the BC Hydro programs shifted. The following three policies hamper such projects:*

- *The concept of “Virtual Net Metering” is presently not supported by BC Hydro*
- *Present net metering projects must be tied to an existing customer’s account*
- *And sizing cannot exceed historical or expected loads*

*Our request would be to have BC Hydro and the Province consider a strategy to allow/develop “Virtual Net Metering” policy for a community co-operative or a community owned sustainable energy project. The parameters of the policy would include the ability of BC Hydro to meet the objectives of balanced production and consumption. This request would fit well in the Comprehensive Review of BC Hydro (Phase 2) that is scheduled for 2019-2020 as a function of the BC Hydro Clean BC initiatives to aid the Province to meet its GHG reduction targets.*

*This supports large and small communities providing a tool to support their various initiatives to meet their climate target goals of zero carbon emissions by 2050 (as per the IPCC report).*

### *At the regional level:*

*In Phase 1 of the Comprehensive review of BC Hydro, one of the recommendations to reduce energy procurement costs, was to allow the expiration of Electricity Purchase Agreements (EPA) for biomass projects and not seek new opportunities through the Standing Offer Program (SOP). BC Hydro’s Power Acquisitions & Contract Management Group spoke with CRD’s Senior Manager for Environmental Resource Management informing him that BC Hydro had surplus power and did not have need to purchase excess power from the Hartland Landfill project. That contract expires in 2024 at which point the renegotiation is unclear as to the security of a renewed EPA. The problem presented for us is going to be experienced by all local governments running landfills whom are looking for a means to curtail fugitive emissions.*

*For our region, it means that we have no security to expand landfill gas capture and conversion to electricity, and thus are being forced to look at building a biogas facility to create a product to use in the Fortis supply infrastructure.*

*This poses several challenges:*

- *By 2050 we need to be off hydrocarbon fuel sources. Zero carbon.*
- *Amortized cost for the lifespan of the proposed facility extends to 2060,*
- *Expenditures on new infrastructure to create a fuel source that has a limited and closing window leads to a stranded asset (amortized costs between 2050-2060).*
- *Many communities (and most in our region) have commitments to be off hydrocarbon fuels by 2050. This includes both LNG and RNG. Due to Provincial and BC Hydro policy, local governments cannot fully meet their climate commitments, forcing them to build infrastructure that ensures continued reliance on hydrocarbon fuels and thus unable to attain zero carbon targets.*

*Other BC communities will be facing similar barriers as biogas generation will not fit with climate goals, scientific reality, or financial resources; whereas electrical generation is much more attainable.*

*Our request is to have the Province, BC Hydro, and BC Utilities Commission consider a waiver of electrical procurement policy to allow procurement from local/regional governments generating electricity from biomass sources enabling projects to reduce community GHG emissions.*

*In closing, goals of local governments to mitigate and reduce their GHGs should be considered in the present policy direction to allow them flexibility to meet their climate targets and avoid investment in infrastructure that has a limited useful lifespan due to the requirement to phase out hydrocarbon fuel use by 2050. Establishing security for Local Governments to generate electricity that align with goals and capacity and developing “Virtual Net Metering” does not open the flood gates for excessive energy procurement but does provide flexibility for solutions.*

*We request that viable, affordable, climate solutions be available to local governments.*

#### **Notes from the two meetings:**

MINISTERS MEETING: Mayor, CAO, myself. The meeting with Minister Mungall (and her staff of four) did not achieve my objectives. Mayor Ken Williams started the conversation...in his first sentence he mentioned solar. The minister is NOT a fan of solar PV. She said BC hydro was the greenest power and we do not need solar in this province. I chimed in with comments about resilience from a distributed grid, full carbon accounting from dams, and the benefits from when we have lots of EV's with batteries to store the excess PV generation, etc. She remained unconvinced.

I redirected to the main reason for our request to meet, which was the regional issues relating to capturing the fugitive methane emissions from the landfill and burning to produce electricity to sell back to hydro. (read details above). I do not think that there was any progress made and did not feel that our concerns were heard. At the end, I was able to hand deliver the latest HDCA letter to her.

BC HYDRO MEETING: Mayor, CAO, myself. I started the discussion. Went well, felt listened to, respected, and had some very high-level policy discussions. Our concerns were validated, but BC Hydro could not help us as Utilities commission sets the details of price etc. I asked them to keep in mind our concerns as we move into more climate focussed policy. They indicated that Hydro has excess electricity well into the 2030's. We discussed the benefits of an east-west electrical grid and how BC could help Alberta transition off of fossil fuels.

Options for regional governments for burning landfill gases that arose in discussions with BC Hydro:

1. Sell electricity to another entity (not BC Hydro). Power X and others.
2. Each expiring contract will be assessed on a case by case basis, but BC Hydro is not required to renew. I asked if a regional government could offer the electricity at a discounted rate. They said yes, that could sweeten the deal for BC Hydro to renew a contract. This may make sense if it means that regional governments can avoid building very expensive new hydrocarbon infrastructure.
3. A local government could use the electricity on site instead of selling into the grid. ie cannabis or food production in a greenhouse ...both ideal as electricity could be used as well as the waste heat. Other energy intensive industries could be considered at the landfill site.

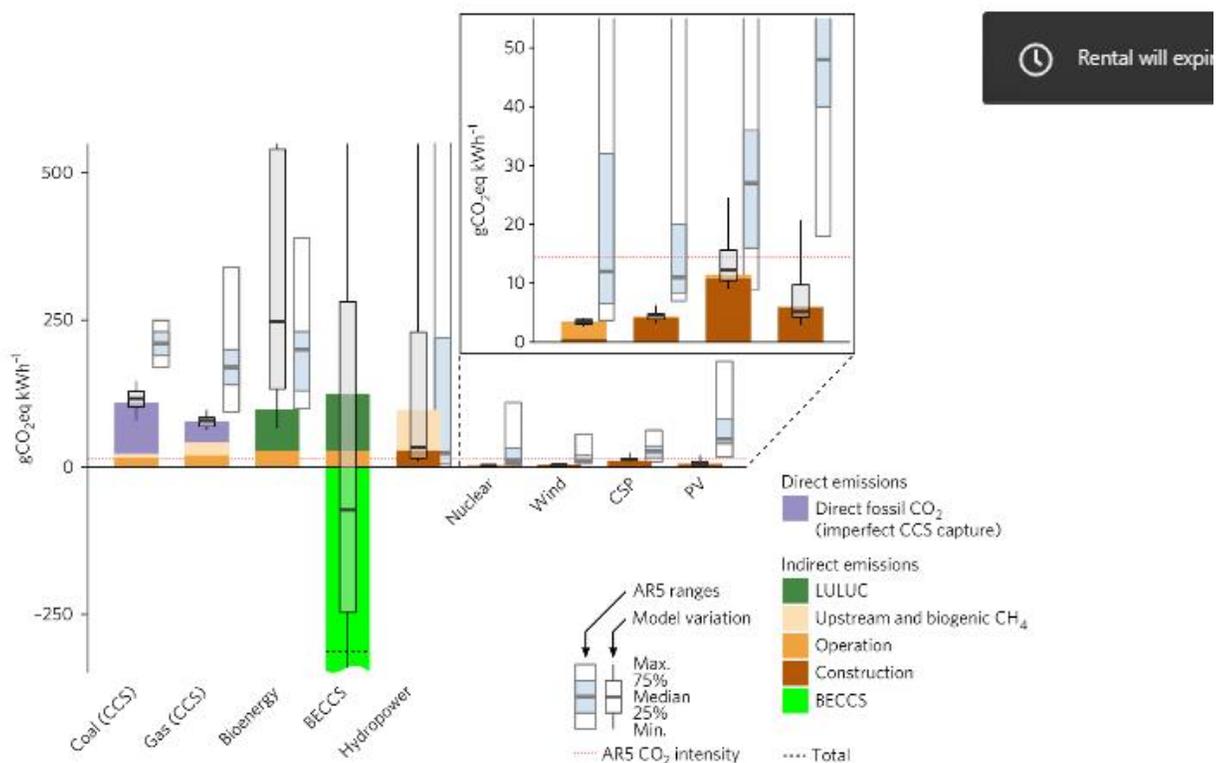
At the end of the meeting they brought up Site C and said that Site C was built to back up the intermittency of solar and wind. The minister (2 days prior), had indicated that solar had no role in BC's energy future.

Both the minister and BC Hydro appeared to not be aware of the current scientific literature. This graph from 2017, uses the best possible case scenarios in terms of lifecycle emissions for new construction from each technology given ideal low or no carbon manufacturing and mining processes (i.e. these are replaced entirely by renewable sources by 2050) and the evidence still shows that solar is lower in GHGs than hydro. (Thanks to a municipal colleague in Sidney for bringing this to my attention)

Source of graph: From Pehl et al. 2017. Understanding future emissions from low-carbon power systems by integration of lifecycle assessment and integrated energy modelling. Nature Energy (2): 939-945.

Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41560-017-0032-9>.

Nuclear, Wind, Solar, and CSP are way better. CCS – Carbon Capture Storage. BECCS – BioEnergy Carbon Capture Storage. LULUC – Land Use and Land Use Changes. CSP – Concentrated Solar Power



**Fig. 2 | Specific direct and indirect GHG emissions.** Global 2050 average of lifetime emissions over lifetime electricity production (solid coloured bars), for capacities built in 2050 in a 2°C-consistent mitigation scenario. Model variations (sample minimum, 25th percentile, median, 75th percentile, and maximum, see Methods) across both regions and technology variants are shown as boxplots. Ranges of specific emissions from AR5, from section 7.8.1, Fig 7.6 in ref. <sup>4</sup> are shown as light blue ranges. BECCS is not assessed there. The (median) 2050 CO<sub>2</sub> intensity of electricity production for AR5 scenarios without CCS (technology category T3) reaching 430–480 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>eq (climate category 1) is shown in red as a proxy for the level of specific net emissions (without negative emissions from BECCS) in line with the 2°C target. See also Supplementary Table 2.

## 2. UBCM interesting notes:

- a. Sooke's mayor Maja Tait was elected as New President
- b. Nanaimo councillor **Ben Geselbracht**, was elected as small communities rep (very strong on the climate front)
- c. UBCM has created a working group on the climate

## 3. The Climate Leadership Caucus

- a. was well attended and had a number of meetings during the week. I attended
- b. Originally founded at FCM, but VERY active membership in BC (Lots from Vancouver Island). [Climatecaucus.ca](http://Climatecaucus.ca)

- c. Currently 18 working groups with elected officials, NGO's, and climate allies. Aligned with IPCC targets. Found on slack: [climate-caucus.slack.com](https://climate-caucus.slack.com) The break out group I attended was on how to operationalize a declaration of climate emergency. Note that some LG's are declaring a Climate AND Ecological Emergency
- d. They meet online every second Monday. Goal is to have one elected official per local government
- e. Discussions of moving away from ideas of carbon neutrality and towards a carbon budget. ie as of Jan 1, 2018 earth had 450gt of CO2 remaining. Today we have less than 350gt. Calculate how much Canada has, BC has, and each LG has. Work within this. At current GHGe rates this remaining budget is used up in 8.5 years.
  - i. Note that these carbon budgets do not take into account any carbon feedbacks or the idea of equity.
  - ii. Also note that even with achieving these reductions, humanity only has a 67% chance of staying below 1.5.
- f. Many in this group headed to the Vancouver strike for Climate event starting at City Hall. I attended along with over 80,000 others.



- 4. Resolutions of interest to Highlands (lots, here's just a few)
  - a. **B192** Canada Post's Neighbourhood Mail. Time ran out – referred to UBCM
  - b. **B7** Safer Slower Streets: 30km/h Residential Street Pilot. Passed. Amend MVA to enable LG's to institute blanket speed zones in residential areas
  - c. **B13** Provincial Forest Management. Relates to funding wildfire mitigation and local capacity
  - d. **B25** Elected LG official's participation in the Municipal Pension Plan. Long debate, but passed. I was opposed.
  - e. **B29 – Restoring Sustainable Provincial Library Funding Levels.** Passed
  - f. **B35** Varied Tax Rate for Residential Class. Failed
  - g. **B72** Wireless connectivity in rural Areas. Passed
  - h. **B87** Cannabis Production Odour Prevention. Passed
  - i. **B108** Youth Voting in LG Elections. Passed
  - j. **B116** Traffic control and enforcement on rural Roads. Increase resources for regulation and enforcement of traffic regulations on rural roads. Passed
  - k. **B127** Collection of Unpaid Fines. ICBC collect outstanding bylaw fines at time of insurance renewal. Passed
  - l. **B136** Recovering LG costs arising from Climate Change. Highlands was the first LG to write climate accountability letters. This resolution was going to be quite the debate, But Victoria Councillor Ben Isitt got to the pro mike and said, "I have some exciting news to share with fellow delegates. One of Canada's leading constitutional lawyers and litigators – Joe Arvay, from the Victoria firm Arvay Finlay – is preparing a legal opinion to support local governments in recovering a portion of costs incurred in relation to climate change. My understanding is that this opinion will be available free of charge to any local government that wants to be aware of its options. Mr. Arvay's decision to prepare this opinion has been influenced by the growing numbers of local governments that are deciding to hold the world's major fossil fuel corporations accountable for their role in the climate crisis.

We know that the petroleum-based economy is dying and needs to be brought to an abrupt end. We see evidence of this all around us – wildfires, drought, rising sea levels, and strains on different species from pine trees in the interior, to cedar trees on the coast, to salmon in our waterways. Working people in resource-based communities are most acutely aware of these impacts of an unstable climate. We are also reminded of this reality by the millions of young and older people who are walking out of their classrooms, off their jobs, and into the streets of cities around the world today, including right here in BC.

Petroleum-based capitalism is a dying system, which is evident to anyone who chooses to open their eyes. Human history demonstrates that all systems rise and fall.

So, what comes next? I don't have the answer, but as community leaders, I think we have a duty to begin the difficult conversation within our communities on what kind of economic and political order lies around the

corner. How do we transition now as communities and as a species to a more sustainable and more inclusive way of living? If we don't start these conversations, who will?

I think we owe it to our children and to future generations (and to species that share this small planet with us) to begin these hard conversations today.

Specific to the resolution, the exploration of legal options noted in this resolution is now well underway.

There is no requirement for UBCM to devote resources to support local governments in these efforts.

**Since the proposed action is already underway, the resolution is redundant and the City of Victoria is withdrawing it.**

We invite any local government that wishes to pursue its legal options to work with us to ensure that our local taxpayers are not on the hook for 100% of the costs incurred in relation to climate change." Note: the long line of delegates standing at the CON mike did not want this item withdrawn, they wanted to defeat it. The membership voted to accept withdrawal.

- m. **B137** Climate Accountability. That BC and the ministry of E&CC enact legislation that holds FF companies liable. Failed 62/38
- n. **B138** Subsidies to Fossil Fuel Companies. End all subsidies and use funds to support LG mitigation and adaptation. Passed
- o. **B139-B142** climate resolutions all passed without much debate. Call to action on global climate emergency, Support for Property Assessed Clean Energy Leg. For BC, Ramping up BC Climate Action in response to Climate Emergency, Promoting and Enabling GHG Reductions, and some low carbon transportation resolutions also passed.
- p. **B152 GHG limits for New buildings.** Failed 46/53. This was from Port Moody and I recall seeing correspondence on this one. Council discussed and was supportive.
- q. **Lots of good water and forestry resolutions passed.**
- r. **Ran out of time for B169-B208** which included all the health/social resolutions. Deferred to UBCM

5. **Small Talk Forum:** Of interest was:

- a. Minister Selena Robinson urged LG's to reach out to her for help. Highlands council may want to consider this option as both our MLA, and the minister of Mines have declined meeting with us to discuss the social implications of a proposed mine in our community.
- b. Resource communities across BC are struggling to reinvent themselves. Virtually no mention of the climate crisis. Huge rural/urban divide on anything climate. Key ideas include placemaking, creation of a rural tech policy, community owned forestry, health centre bundling.
- c. At lunch, I sat at a table beside a councillor working to expand the coal mine in his community.
- d. Enderby's initiative called the "Harvest Hut" could be of interest to Highlands.
  - i. Food security and less food waste
  - ii. Social benefits
  - iii. Very inexpensive shed with fridge where once per week people donate extra garden food and anyone can show up to take some home. Food not processed or washed, just shared and therefore no liability issues. Run by volunteers.