

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Citizens' Conservation Councils on Climate Action

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## Final Progress Report

LiveSmartBC.ca

11/18/2009





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## Introduction

In October of 2008, seven regional Citizens' Conservation Councils (CCCs) on Climate Action were established. Their mandate was to help inform government (1) on regionally relevant ways to engage citizens to reduce greenhouse gases and develop low carbon economic opportunities, and (2) ways to educate and inform citizens about the challenges of climate change and ways to reduce their own carbon footprints.

In February of 2009, the CCCs presented their initial set of recommendations to the Cabinet Committee on Climate Action (CCCA). Following this report, there was a desire expressed by government and many council members that the councils extend their mandate to directly engage citizens in their communities. In response, the council mandate was updated to allow for a more action oriented focus.

This change in mandate led to the creation and implementation of Regional Action Plans focused on engaging citizens in their communities to take action to reduce emissions. The council members have been busy since March implementing these regional engagement activities. Their mandate ends in December of 2009. This final report outlines some of the highlights from these action plans, provides council advice on future needs for a regional engagement program, and presents the councils' final list of recommendations for government on how to most effectively engage British Columbians.

## Regional Action Plan Implementation

Each council implemented a regional action plan between August and November of 2009. The Regional Action Plans were very ambitious and required the dedication of a significant amount of time and energy from council members. Stories about some of the key successes of these plans are included throughout this report. Those activities that were not implemented due to time constraints should be considered for future regional engagement activities. Overall, the implementation of these action plans was a huge success for council members.

For more stories of success, check out the Citizens' Council blog at <http://blog.gov.bc.ca/livesmartbc>.

## The Future of Regional Engagement

The future of regional engagement should focus on building upon the success of the council program. The key role of a regional engagement program should be coordination and facilitation of initiatives that are happening in communities throughout the province. There are many organizations, citizens, and communities that government can work with to implement council recommendations and regional action plan items.

Council members recognized that many of the recommendations and regional action plan activities, including those described in this report, are large in scope and will require coordinated, community action to implement. Many council members have indicated that they will continue to support efforts to implement them.

## Thompson/Okanagan Social Marketing Campaign

The Thompson/Okanagan Council has organized two public engagement events. The first was on June 10, 2009 and coincided with an event at the Environmental Education Centre for the Okanagan. There was a great turnout; the Mayor of Kelowna attracted a lot of people as well as the local media. The event introduced the council to the community and explained its role in the region.

The second event is planned for November 27, 2009. This event will bring together community leaders to discuss how the region is progressing in reducing its carbon emissions. In addition to this event, the council has created a social marketing campaign that includes print ad in local newspapers. This campaign could be used all over the province.

Check out the rest of the posters at <http://blog.gov.bc.ca/livesmartbc>.



The councils recognize that there is an astounding amount of action happening in British Columbia as local governments, industry, non-government organizations, academic institutions, and private citizens are working to further the climate action agenda. This speaks to the importance of this issue in the minds of British Columbians. Government can play a key role in supporting community efforts with up to date progress reports, information and research.

## Ongoing Regional Engagement Focus

### Regionally Driven

Citizen engagement needs to continue to be regionally defined. For example, coordination of resources and information exchange is important in the Lower Mainland. In the Skeena region, there is not as much momentum on this issue. Public engagement is the more pressing need.

### Focus on Collaboration and Partnership

We need to work with the willing and help them do their work better. One of the most important outcomes of the council program was the increased collaboration between the Climate Action Secretariat and engaged citizens. Future regional engagement initiatives can build upon these relationships and increase focus on working with other organizations and citizens in communities throughout BC.

### Action Oriented

Government has received many relevant recommendations for next steps in engaging British Columbians. The future of the regional engagement program should focus on implementation of these recommendations and the items included in the council Regional Action Plans.

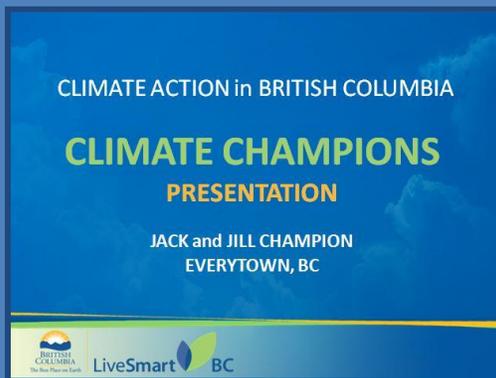
## Lower Mainland/Southwest Community Based Social Marketing Workshop

On October 29 2009, the Lower Mainland Council held a training seminar for community leaders at the VanCity head office. The purpose of this training seminar was to impart information to community leaders on key messages for climate action and to inform people on the most up to date research on human behaviour change, human psychology, and the most effective messaging for climate change education.

There were over 20 community leaders in attendance. The day started with a presentation from Olympic athlete Ryan Leech, who discussed with the attendees why he is motivated to take action for this issue. He gave an overview of Project Blue Sky, a Citizens' Conservation Council supported online tool that helps people have fun and challenge each other in their quest to reduce their carbon emissions.

Attendees also received training on community based social marketing, including an overview of the most up-to-date social science research on canadian perspectives on sustainability from Hoggan and Associates.

Attendees were also provided with a digital toolkit to extend what they had learned to their communities.



## Key Actions for Regional Engagement in 2009 and 2010

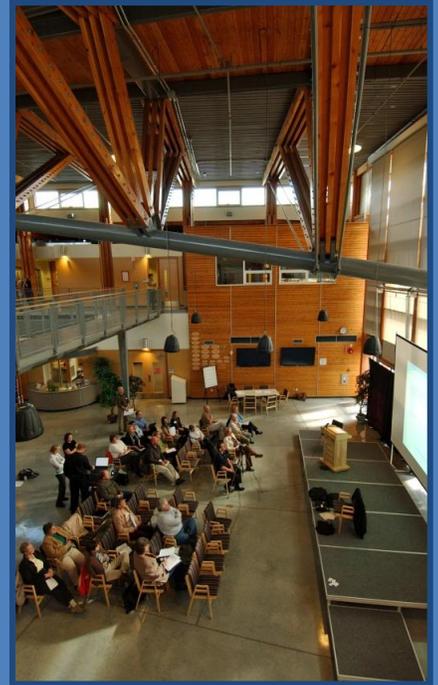
- 1. Demonstrate Government's Continued Support**
  - Report regularly on CCC recommendations that have been or are being implemented by government
  - Focus CAS regional engagement support behind the implementation of Regional Action Plans and key council recommendations
- 2. Foster and Empower Regional Networks to Take Action**
  - Develop and implement a broader climate action network to increase communication and collaboration between citizens or organizations that actively support climate action.
  - Hold semi-regular regional Climate Action Community Forums
  - Work with partners to implement Regional Action Plans, council recommendations, and other community initiatives
  - Develop a regional coordination role to help people work more collaboratively
  - Increase support for grassroots climate action initiatives
- 3. Celebrate Success**
  - Use LiveSmartBC to profile local businesses, communities, and individuals who are setting an example, in demonstrating the role all British Columbians can play and the business case for climate action
  - Develop an annual "Celebration of Local Success" program in conjunction with partners such as UBCM
- 4. Make Climate Action a Norm**
  - Expand the use of the piloted Okanagan Social Marketing Campaign to other areas of BC
  - Extend Lower Mainland "Behaviour Change Train the Trainer" event to other areas of BC (see side bar on page 6)
  - Make the LiveSmart BC brand more regionally focussed, highlighting local leaders

## Cariboo/Prince George Regional Summit

The Cariboo-Prince George Council hosted an event in March 2009 where Dr. Stephen Sheppard from UBC came to speak to community members about their future vision for their region.

The community expressed that they have already seen or experienced climate change; weather changes, mountain pine beetle destruction, flooding and erosion of soil from river banks are some examples. The community also commented on the barriers to climate action (people's attitude, economics, sense of urgency is not there, no leadership by developers to encourage alternative heating). This group of community members also came up with some suggestions on how to get people to change their behaviour regarding climate change. People discussed a variety of solutions including: creating more bike paths, zoning by-laws created with climate action in mind, ICBC licensing for multiple vehicles and increased access to incentive programs.

A second event was held in Quesnel on October 7 2009. It was unique in that the outcomes would directly influence the recommendations that the council would submit to Cabinet Committee on Climate Action and Green Energy. At this event there were different topics such as transportation, waste, bio-energy, food security and movement towards a low carbon economy. From these topics a small report was created and presentations will be given to municipal governments.



## Final Recommendations to Cabinet Committee

### PROVINCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Expand use of taxes to encourage positive behaviour change

The Citizens' Conservation Councils overwhelmingly support putting a price on carbon, which provides a pressure upon people's behaviour choices. In addition, the tax revenue could be allocated to programs that promote positive behaviour change. This policy tool can be focussed on building a green economy and capacity for lower carbon options throughout BC.

#### 2. Make the LiveSmart BC program regionally focused

Messaging regarding climate change and the LiveSmartBC brand should be more regionally focused and should address specific local needs. Government should work with regional representatives and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions to initiate social science research to guide LiveSmart BC regional messaging.

#### 3. Annual Celebration of Success for Climate Action Leaders

To promote a spirit of collective action, government could design an annual celebration of success that would highlight the positive differences that climate action leaders are making. This celebration could recognize businesses with innovative practices, communities with smart community development plans, and other people who are providing positive examples for others to live by. This award should be given

for five different themes: 1) Local Food Development 2) Transportation 3) Waste Reduction/Diversion/Waste Energy 4) Low Carbon Economy 5) Green Energy.

#### **4. Update Vehicle Insurance Policies**

In many areas of BC, it is necessary to drive a vehicle suitable for winter weather. As a result, British Columbians end up driving a large vehicle year round instead of only when needed for road conditions. Facilitate ownership of lower emission vehicles by working with ICBC to allow people to license two vehicles under one license if one of the vehicles is a low-emissions or zero emissions vehicle. This would allow people to drive vehicles with higher emissions only when necessary. In addition, ICBC could expand insurance rate policies to be based upon criteria such as the distance travelled, evening and weekend rates, and other rates that would encourage positive driving behaviour.

#### **5. Work with municipalities or utility companies to provide low interest loans to homeowners for retrofits**

Government could encourage local governments or utility companies to provide low interest loans that are paid back through property taxes or utility bills at a rate that is less than the monthly energy savings received from the home retrofit installation. This loan would be connected to the home or utilities of the home rather than the homeowner in the case that the house is sold. This would significantly encourage homeowners to undertake upgrades knowing that they will reap the rewards immediately.

#### **6. Develop regional coordination role to help communities work more collaboratively and learn from each other**

The councils believe that coordination and collaboration between communities, organizations, and academic institutions remains a challenge. While there is a lot happening on the ground, some local governments, schools, and businesses remain unaware of the opportunities available to them to take climate action. Regional coordinators fill a significant gap by linking educators, local governments, and the provincial government with one another to increase coordination and collaboration on this issue. This type of person also helps to ensure that government engagement and outreach efforts are targeted, regionally focused, and relevant to regional needs.

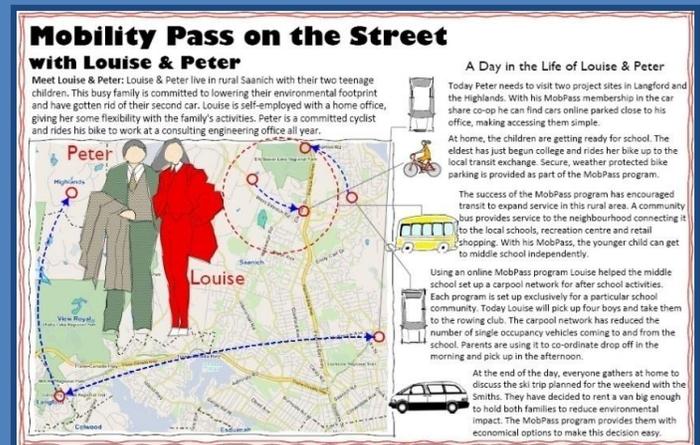
#### **7. Provide more resources to educators for curriculum development.**

Provide regionally specific resources to enable teachers to implement climate change related curriculum. While there are a lot of materials available, it is not packaged in a way that is regionally relevant. Government could also work with the Scientists in Schools program to help get climate scientists into classrooms throughout BC.

## Vancouver Island Mobility Pass

The Vancouver Island/Coast Council has begun fostering discussions on Vancouver Island about the possibility of a regional Mobility Pass. This pass would provide access or special rates to a variety of forms of alternative transportation, thus facilitating easier access to alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle. The council has had one think tank with BC Ferries, Pacific Coach Lines, BC Transit, city planners, and the Victoria Car Share Co-op. At this event the council presented scenarios on how the pass may work for different individuals. The event was a success in identifying challenges and barriers to implementing this type of program

The council will be holding a visioning session on November 5, 2009 at UVIC. The council understands that this type of pass is in its infancy however they are extremely passionate about the possibilities that a program like this would provide, and will continue to research the feasibility of the idea going forward.



### 8. Improve regulatory regime to account for the regional needs for local food production and distribution

Every region presented different local needs and regulatory barriers that prevent people from growing food locally and selling it in their communities. The councils recommend that the government:

- 1) Re-evaluate agriculture and food distribution regulations in BC to facilitate local food production
- 2) Work with the federal government to develop a local processing system;
- 3) Conduct an analysis of regionally specific barriers to local food development and take steps to remove those barriers; and
- 4) Promote low energy, low emissions food production methods in BC.

## REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### CARIBOO/PRINCE GEORGE

#### 1. Showcase the Cariboo as a leader in bioenergy and managing forests for carbon and other non-timber forest products

Work with communities to showcase the Cariboo/Prince George region as a leader in bioenergy and managing forests for carbon and other non-timber forest products. Government could use BC's four research forests (all located within the Cariboo Region), the wood pellet and bioenergy industry, and educational institutions (from kindergarten to doctoral programs) to foster a low-carbon economy based on our natural resources.

#### 2. Create an online tool to help homeowners decide on appropriate renewable energy heating options

Using the Solar BC online home rating tool as a model, Governments and utilities should build an online tool that would provide homeowners with practical information about the renewable energy options

that are most appropriate for their homes and communities. This service would use the physical address, postal code, house size, gas and electricity consumption levels, and other relevant information to calculate the costs/benefits/savings of different energy technologies (high-efficiency gas furnaces, wood pellets, geothermal, solar, wind, etc.) for an individual home in a particular community.

## **KOOTENAYS**

### **1. Increase availability and coordination of alternative transportation options**

Alternative transportation options need to be expanded in the Kootenays. Government can:

- 1) Increase coordination between the transit system and the school bus system;
- 2) Support grassroots programs that are under development such as carpool services; and
- 3) Expand infrastructure for inter-community alternative transportation using existing railways.

### **2. Infrastructure should be created to reduce emissions from the trucking industry**

Electrify truck stops to help reduce engine idling (ie. for refrigeration trucks). In addition, government should work with the trucking industry to develop behaviour change programs to teach truck drivers how to reduce their emissions.

## **LOWER MAINLAND/SOUTHWEST**

### **1. Reduce the convenience of single occupancy vehicle travel**

Government should promote alternative transportation options beyond transit through programs such as carpool services, bike rental programs, and car co-op programs. Government can also make single vehicle occupancy less convenient by:

- 1) Encouraging the installation of parking meters in all commercial areas;
- 2) Reducing highway speed limits; and
- 3) Encouraging local governments to create more *transit only* lanes.

### **2. Develop or support incentives to encourage people to live closer to their place of employment**

Government can help encourage people to live closer to their place of employment by:

- 1) Working with financial institutions to provide incentives such as location specific mortgages to make it easier for people to purchase housing close to their place of employment; and
- 2) Using fiscal incentives to encourage businesses to locate in places close to housing suitable to the average income of their staff,
- 3) and encourage businesses to provide financially competitive alternative transportation options.

## **NORTHEAST**

### **1. Increase public understanding of the consequences of high power consumption and the benefits of local, small scale, alternative energy**

Some residents perceive that their actions will not make a difference for climate action due to the increased demand for northeast energy by those in other parts of BC. The government should educate British Columbians on the effects of energy development and promote small scale power production closer to those that consume it. By seeing the ecological, health, and social impacts of high energy consumption, British Columbians will be more connected to the consequences of their own energy choices. This will increase acceptance of local alternative energy development. Government can:

- 1) Provide more information to energy consumers on their utility bills about the environmental impacts of energy development;
- 2) Supporting entrepreneurs who are working to develop alternative energy projects by directing research and development investment towards location specific alternative energy options.

This recommendation is supported by the Lower Mainland/Southwest Council.

### **2. Increase focus on alternative energy options suitable for the Northeast**

There is great potential for alternative energy in the Northeast due to existing infrastructure and industrial capacities. Government can demonstrate the benefits of a green economy by focusing on the expansion of alternative energy projects.

- 1) Provide incentive programs to encourage local industry to use existing infrastructure to develop alternative power for local consumption; and
- 2) Explore the potential of different sources of biomass waste in the Northeast to use for power generation such as animal waste, forestry waste and agricultural waste.

## **SKEENA/NORTH COAST**

### **1. Stronger Regional Partnerships between communities for regional recycling**

Recycling programs are difficult to implement in many areas of the region. Communities need to work together, learn from one another, and share resources for recycling to be feasible. To facilitate this, government can:

- 1) Work to develop local, small scale recycling processing facilities; and
- 2) Develop regional recycling programs to provide support and guidelines to local communities to determine what is feasible and what is not feasible for different communities.

## **2. Facilitate Climate Action through employment initiatives**

Climate Action in the Skeena region should be addressed in conjunction with the other social issues this region faces.

- 1) Work with the Federal Government to re-direct employment promotion funding in the Skeena region to develop green initiatives such as local food development, green infrastructure, and tree planting; and
- 2) Invest in green economic development to help connect economic opportunity with climate action. This would be very effective in getting people on board with making personal behaviour changes for climate action.

### **THOMPSON/OKANAGAN**

#### **1. Improve alternative transportation options between communities**

There is a need for more alternative transportation options between communities in this region. Government should fund a study to:

- 1) Determine the most feasible forms of inter-community travel and dedicate funding to develop infrastructure for these transportation options to offset the immediate costs;
- 2) Provide recommendations to local governments about the most appropriate alternative transportation options to ensure that communities are making smart choices about transportation infrastructure.

#### **2. Coordinate semi-regular regional climate action forum**

Government should:

- 1) Facilitate and coordinate an annual regional forum for local organizations, local governments, and businesses. This event would frame the issue as a community issue and encourage municipalities to work together and support one another; and
- 2) Design an online platform including a visual barometer representing the progress the region is making. It would help the region to continually assess its progress towards carbon emissions reduction targets.

### **VANCOUVER ISLAND/COAST**

#### **1. Increase support for community-led grassroots initiatives**

The government can serve an important role of facilitation and coordination for local grassroots climate action initiatives by:

- 1) Providing microloans to groups to implement small community projects;
- 2) Providing literature, information, toolkits, and other resources; and

- 3) Continuing to provide recognition and support for grassroots climate action initiatives by profiling their actions with the LiveSmart BC brand.

## **2. Support further research on the feasibility of a regional mobility pass**

The council has been exploring the feasibility of a regional transit pass that provides access to multiple forms of alternative transportation. The council requests that government continue to support this study after the mandate of the councils ends. This model has been used in other areas of the world successfully and could significantly reduce barriers to using alternative transportation on Vancouver Island.

### **Special Thank You**

The Citizens' Conservation Councils would like to extend special thanks to those that have helped us over the last year. While it would be impossible to thank everyone who worked with us, we would like to thank the following notable people and organizations for their support over the past year:

Jan Enns and Carol Suhan; Joan Chess, Maureen LeBourdais, Peter Ostergaard, Angela Evans, Laurie Cordell from the Fraser Basin Council; everyone at Vancity Head Office; Kindy Gosal from the Columbia Basin Trust; Jim Hoggan and Associates; Eric Beevor-Potts and Maria Hodgins from BC Hydro; Ben Finkelstein and the Youth Climate Leadership Alliance; Al Kenning, Maurice Mauch, and Jan Mongard from the City of Nanaimo; Jan Johnston and Tracy Guidi from the City of Kelowna; Ted Sheldon from the Ministry of Environment; Paul Crossley from the BC Government Online Channel Office; Danielle Myles, Cory Waters, and Andrew Pape-Salmon from the Ministry of Energy and Mines; Cindy Ravelli and Renee Brown and the staff of Northern Lights College; Marlene Beaulieu from the College of New Caledonia; Sean Darling, David Thompson and Charles Homles from Cool North Shore; Dr Stephen Sheppard and Kristi Tatebe from the University of British Columbia; the gang at THINK Marketing; Sue Hallatt, Sarah Webb, Malcolm MacPhail, Chloe Tunis, Anke Bergner, and Wendy Dunn from the Capital Regional District; Jason Adams from the Victoria Compost Education Society; and James Adams from reFUSE Organic Waste Collection.

For those that we missed, a sincere thank you for helping to move forward citizen-led climate action in BC. Together we are making a difference!