



# COWICHAN

The Cowichan Climate Hub was founded in 2021 and serves the Cowichan Valley Regional District, including Duncan, North Cowichan, Ladysmith & Lake Cowichan.

*The Cowichan Climate Hub works to foster community awareness about the climate emergency and engage in collaborative conversations to achieve solutions-focused climate action locally. We are a collaboration of local groups seeking to support and work together with local governments, so no one is left behind.*

March 12, 2022

To the Lake Cowichan Mayor and Council,

As a collaboration of local social benefit and environmental non-profits, faith groups, farmers, small businesses, schools, labour groups and others concerned about the climate emergency, we are writing to ask Lake Cowichan, and all five local governments in the Cowichan Valley, to commit to getting fossil fuel emissions, both natural gas and oil, out of the built environment in the Cowichan Valley, starting with requirements for new construction.

Buildings generate nearly 40% of annual global CO2 emissions globally – more than 40% in North American communities. Of those total emissions, building operations are responsible for 30% annually, almost all from space and water heating using oil and gas. In our region fossil-fuel-propelled transportation and fossil fuel use in the built environment are together responsible for the lion's share of our emissions.

On February 28<sup>th</sup> the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest Climate Report said: "The scientific evidence is unequivocal, any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a livable future." This is their most dire report to date, which goes on to say, "Changing course will require immediate, ambitious, and concerted efforts to slash emissions." Aiming for 2050 targets will not address the crisis we face. We need immediate action at all levels of government. As local citizens and organizations we are committed to working together with local governments on solutions.

The city of Vancouver has passed a bylaw banning fossil fuel space heating and water heating in new homes and low-rise residential construction. Other BC municipalities, like North Vancouver, have added a low carbon compliance pathway to their Construction Regulation Bylaw for new buildings as part of their Energy Step Code, with incentives for developers to phase out gas and move to energy-efficient heat pumps. Heat pumps provide both space heating and cooling at low cost and are getting wide uptake world-wide as they cut carbon emissions cost-effectively.

There is more than one mechanism for local government to reduce building emissions. We are asking you to be climate champions and aim to implement a change by 2023. Every year we don't address emissions in new construction, we are locking homeowners into the higher cost of retrofits, along with the increased heat waves, forest fires and extreme floods that come with delaying action.

Shifting away from natural gas will also be both a climate and a health win for Valley residents. Over the past 20 years studies have shown the negative health impacts of natural gas. Indoor nitrogen dioxide levels from gas cooking and fireplaces, as well as space heating, correlates with children having a 42 per cent higher chance of having asthma.

We look forward to working together with you on climate solutions.

Sincerely,

David, Jane, Adrienne, Sandy, Ellen, Karen, Madi and Jasmine  
for the Cowichan Climate Hub [Cowichan@ClimateHub.ca](mailto:Cowichan@ClimateHub.ca)



Chemainus Climate Solutions \*Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre \*Cowichan Carbon Busters \*Cowichan Valley Earth Guardians  
\*Cowichan Valley Naturalists \*Duncan United Church \*Eco-Wisdom Adventures \*For Our Kids Cowichan \*Ol' MacDonald's Farm \*One Cowichan \*Michelle Rose Community Supported Fishery \*Polster Environmental Services \*Save Our Holmes \*Shawl Farm \*Socially Responsible Investing Cowichan \*Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society \*Sylvan United Church \*Transition Cowichan \*Wilder Restoration \*and more..