



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office

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Sent via email: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

March 30, 2021

The Honourable George Heyman, M.L.A.  
Minister of Environment  
and Climate Change Strategy  
PO Box 9047 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Heyman,

Re: Advocacy to Advance Saanich's Climate Plan

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On March 15, 2021 Saanich Council considered a Report to Council on the Help Cities Lead (HCL) campaign and resolved as follows:

*"That the Mayor write a letter on behalf of Council to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy; the Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation; the Minister of Municipal Affairs; the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing, and the Minister of Finance expressing:*

- *Its endorsement of the Help Cities Lead Campaign;*
- *support for the directions set out in the November 2020 ministerial mandate letters regarding greenhouse gas requirements for new buildings, PACE financing, and home energy labelling; and*
- *requesting that the Province empower local governments to opt to take action, if they so choose, on the two remaining items of the Help Cities Lead campaign, greenhouse gas requirements for existing buildings and building energy benchmarking."*

As you are aware, municipalities are on the front lines of climate change dealing with the impacts of floods, droughts, forest fires, heat waves, etc. We directly influence about half of Canada's energy use and emissions. The success of the Province in achieving deep emissions reductions from the building sector is directly connected to the success of local governments in achieving their own targets. While municipalities have shown strong climate leadership, expanded regulatory authority is needed for taking bolder steps to achieving our climate targets.

HCL is an education and awareness campaign focused on accelerating building decarbonization through collaboration between the Province of British Columbia and local governments. The group is led by Climate Caucus and supported by local governments and environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's).

Emissions from buildings account for about 11% of the province's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 35% of Saanich community-wide GHG emissions. In 2019, District of Saanich Council declared a climate emergency, alongside a number of other local governments and the Capital Regional District. Shortly following this, Saanich Council approved the Climate Plan, which includes a target for Saanich to become a 100% renewable energy community and cut community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in half by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. For Saanich to achieve these targets, our modelled pathway indicated that for buildings we must:

- Achieve the highest steps of the Step Code by 2025
- Replace 100% of oil heating with heat pumps by 2030
- Replace 40% of natural gas space and hot water systems with renewable sources by 2030 and 100% by 2050
- Upgrade 40% of all building envelopes by 2030 and 80% by 2050

However, local governments are extremely limited in the tools we have available to us to achieve these targets, and those we have are insufficient to achieve the broad and deep energy and GHG reductions required.

The HCL campaign recommends a suite of expanded authorities for local governments that will enable communities to take bolder action on reducing GHG emissions from new and existing buildings:

- Property assessed clean energy (PACE) financing
- Mandatory home energy labelling
- Regulating GHG emissions for new buildings
- Regulating GHG emissions for existing buildings
- Mandatory building energy benchmarking and reporting

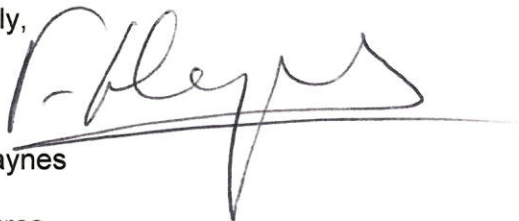
These recommendations are fully aligned with the findings of the Saanich Climate Plan, which contains specific actions related to each – many focused on advocating to the Province for legislative change or implementation at the Provincial level to enable the above to be achieved.

We were extremely encouraged to see that the November 2020 mandate letters to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Infrastructure support the implementation of PACE financing. We also note that the mandate letter for the Minister of Finance supports home energy labelling. Finally we were pleased to see that the mandate letter to the Attorney-General and Minister Responsible for Housing includes support for regulation of GHG emission of new buildings. We support the directions set out in these new mandate letters and look forward to accelerated action on their implementation. In addition, we request that the Province empower local governments to take action on the two remaining items of the Help Cities Lead campaign, namely GHG requirements for existing buildings and building energy benchmarking.

An excerpt of the March 15 meeting minutes and a copy of the report on the HCL are enclosed. You can read more on the critical value they provide to Saanich at [Saanich.ca/climateplan](https://saanich.ca/climateplan).

It is our hope that you would consider meeting with a delegation from Help Cities Lead for further discussion on these initiatives.

Sincerely,



Fred Haynes  
Mayor

Enclosures

cc: Saanich Council