

Ginny Gemmell

From: Edgar Dearden <eddie@gnarinc.com>
Sent: Monday, April 24, 2023 1:30 PM
To: Council
Subject: Simple Language Update to Boost Climate Awareness & Drive Immediate Action
Attachments: Transcripts asking 'Do you know what natural gas is'.pdf

To the Mayor and Council,

Imagine hearing the term "natural gas" for the very first time. What might it mean? Logically, one might assume it refers to any gas naturally emitted, such as oxygen (O₂) produced by plants, carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by animals, or radon (Rn) produced by rocks.

There are, in fact, many hundreds of naturally occurring gasses on Earth. Plants alone produce several hundred types of gas when taking into account various volatile organic compounds (VOCs), primary and secondary metabolites, hormones, and other trace gasses that plants produce during their metabolic processes and in response to environmental stimuli.

However, the term "natural gas" as you use it specifically refers to just one, methane (CH₄), a product of anaerobic decomposition of organic matter.

I am writing to express my concern that many residents of your municipality may not be aware that "natural gas" is a fossil fuel. I have attached a PDF containing transcripts of conversations with six working professionals in BC who could not correctly define "natural gas."

Now, consider hearing the term "fossil gas" for the very first time. One might logically deduce that it refers to a gas that is a fossil fuel, which is accurate. The term "fossil" means "preserved from a past geologic age," and "fossil gas" aptly describes the combustible gas obtained through hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" from shale rock formations under the ground in Northern BC.

I request that your organization update its style guide to replace the term "natural gas" with "fossil gas" when referring to the gas supplied to consumers. This change would clarify that the subject is fossil fuel that we must urgently reduce.

This simple, impactful climate action can be enacted immediately by updating documents using the Find & Replace function in most word processing applications. Please consider the following motion to direct municipal staff to make this change:


"WHEREAS the term 'natural gas' may lead to confusion about its nature as a fossil fuel, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council directs municipal staff to replace the term 'natural gas' with 'fossil gas' in all municipal documentation, thereby improving public understanding and promoting urgency in addressing climate change."

Kind Regards,



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BE GREEN
KEEP IT ON
THE SCREEN

We gratefully acknowledge the land, now known as Whistler and Revelstoke, where we live create and play, in the unceded traditional lands of the Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh and Lílwat7úl, the Sinixt, Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Syilx.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTS ASKING: 'DO YOU KNOW WHAT NATURAL GAS IS?'

Conversation 1 (two people present):

Eddie: Do you know what natural gas is?

Person 1: I think natural gas is like the actual air gas

Person 2: No, not really. Why?

Eddie: I'm just curious, do you know what it is?

Person 1: I don't know if its like liquid or actual air gas

Person 2: I think it's like a fuel and you like, put it in a tank and burn it?

Eddie: Sure that's close enough

Person 2: Yes, nailed it!

Conversation 2:

Eddie: Do you know what natural gas is?

Person 3: Gas that comes from the earth naturally

Eddie: Could you tell me more about that?

Person 3: No I don't know

Eddie: Do you know where they get it from?

Person 3: No

Eddie: Do you know what it is?

Person 3: No I don't know, it's a long time since I've been in science class

Conversation 3:

Eddie: May I ask you the question I ask everyone who starts here?

Person 4: Yes

Eddie: Do you know what natural gas is?

Person 4: I don't want to say yes but I don't want to say no

Eddie: Say whatever you think

Person 4: No not really

Eddie: I keep telling everyone that people don't know what natural gas is.

Person 4: I don't think I really know, maybe if I looked it up.

Conversation 4:

Eddie: You seem like an informed fellow, I have a question that I have been asking people, do you know what natural gas is?

Person 5: Natural?

Eddie: Natural gas.

Person 5: Where it actually comes from, or what it actually is?

Eddie: Yeah, what is it?

Person 5: I know it's not propane, but I know it is something similar to it. But, I wouldn't actually know to tell you the truth what actual real natural gas is and where it comes from.

Eddie: That's a perfect, great answer. I'm finding most people don't know.

Person 5: I know natural gas is similar to propane, but I know it is not the same. I know that what we have in our houses is natural. Where they get it from and all that I don't know.

Eddie: Do you know what fossil gas is?

Person 5: No.

Eddie: Can you figure it out?

Person 5: Gas that's a fossil fuel?

Conversation 5:

Eddie: I'm going to ask you a question I ask everyone, is that ok?

Person 6: No problem, go for it.

Eddie: Do you know what 'natural gas' is?

Person 6: Gas that's natural

Eddie: Did you just say 'gas that is natural'?

Person 6: I have no idea! But I'm pretty sure it's gas that is better for the environment.

Eddie: Ok, but what is it?

Person 6: I don't know.

Eddie: Search your memory bank, what do you know about it

Person 6: Do you hook it up to your house?

Eddie: Yes, you hook it up to your house.

Person 6: It's gas that's better!

Eddie: Better than what?

Person 6: Than regular.

Eddie: Regular what?

Person 6: Regular gas. Are they the same thing or not?

Eddie: Like gas that you put in your car?

Person 6: Are you talking about gas that you put in your car or gas gas?

Eddie: When people say 'put gas in your car' they mean gasoline

Person 6: Oh right. So you're talking about gas that doesn't go in your car

Eddie: Well it is confusing, there are vehicles that use 'compressed natural gas'

Person 6: So it does go in your car! So it's like fuel.

Eddie: Yes, it is like fuel. But do you know what it is?

Person 6: I don't know, tell me

Eddie: Natural gas is a fossil fuel. I call it fossil gas.

Person 6: How do they get it?

Eddie: Here in Canada they use this process called 'fracking' or hydraulic fracturing. They drill down under the earth, then fill it with chemicals and blow the frack out of it. All the rock gets punctured which releases the gas, but it can also poison aquifers and groundwater.

Person 6: So it's not good?

Eddie: No its really bad for the environment

Person 6: Why do they call it 'natural'

Eddie: Exactly! Why do they call it natural!?

Person 6: So it f**ks everything up?

Eddie: Yes basically, that is why we have global warming.

Person 6: Oh cool... s**t. That sucks.