

A CARBON BUSTER'S RESPONSE TO STAFF'S 2024 SOLAR REPORT

Submitted to North Cowichan Council, November, 2024

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THANK YOU FOR LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Review of CAEP, investigating the Sue Bit Oil campaign, listening to me....again

- You have asked staff to look more closely into increasing solar energy within CAEP
- Public is sympathetic but political leadership is crucial
- I am just a citizen - not requesting money, not running for Council, here for support
- Council is busy but ask that you get more engaged in the climate change crisis

BACKGROUND

SOLAR REPORTS - 2021, 2023, 2023 Carbon Buster Presentation. 2024 report
I want to support staff and Council - not just criticise, I am not a solar fanatic
I met with staff regarding my response to their report

SUMMARY

Latest report is unacceptable - only action is one small demonstration project
inadequate in the face of world wide disasters, a world-wide solar revolution

We are just kicking the can down the road

My question to Council - if it's an emergency, why no urgency?

We cannot solve all problems but we should do our best to save lives.

We are all in this together - when CAEP was initiated we needed a 1% carbon
reduction; not it is 7%

Climate disaster will occur in Cowichan. What is our legacy?

Resist social pressures to do nothing.

REPORT ISSUES

A world-wide solar revolution - solar technology is proven, no demo needed

Small demo project - not appropriate in this emergency - Spain's floods are coming. Local solar provides many advantages - resilience, lower transmission costs, etc. - see 2023 report

Solar Payback is inappropriate - excludes damage by fossil fuels, nobody asks for payback with gas

Government funds projects for the future benefit of society - iike a climate crisis

Consultant says money not only criterion, solar can stimulate valuable "community-based approach"

Sue Big Oil campaign - implicitly recognizes the damage from fossil fuels

Report says solar has "high cost to emission reduction" - but this is not true

Solar carbon emissions are 20-50 times less than hydro - recent science

Scientific link between disastrous storms and climate change - education needed, little cost

More local jobs with solar vs fossil fuels.- eg Viridian etc. why is this not an issue?

People sympathetic, need motivation but it's difficult

politicians must lead - you have moral authority and the responsibility

Solar energy is needed - now

BC Hydro bought dirty electricity last summer due to climate change droughts

BC Hydro December report? - may open up solar, lobby them - don't wait

Waiting not viable in an era of climate disruption

Municipalities control 50% of carbon emissions --eg. garbage removal, building codes

We should "do our best" regardless of BC Hydro policies, China, etc.

Some ideas

No official recommendations -I ask Council to get more engaged, the ball is in your park

Solar panels on municipal hall - opportunity for public education/motivation, call it infrastructure, not a demo. It will pay back eventually

Promote net metering - no cost to Council

Actively encourage (lobby?) BC Hydro

Better committee structure? - EAC has no time?

More public engagement - little cost, lawn signs, lobby the public, volunteers?

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING, Peter Nix, Cowichan Carbon Buster

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

QUOTES FROM CAEP “The community must fundamentally change” and “fossil fuels are causing unprecedented changes to climate and weather”

Cities like Edmonton actually provide a financial incentive for people to put solar on their roofs. Properties must have four or more permitted units or dwellings and are eligible for rebates based on the size of their system, to a maximum \$4,000 per dwelling and a maximum of \$100,000 total rebate per property owner per calendar year.

Pakistan’s solar energy input went from .3% to 10% in the last year alone. Europe decreased its carbon emissions by 8% last year due to solar and wind energy. We don’t need to prove the benefits of solar. We need to act like it’s an emergency.

If the fossil fuel industry were treated the same as the solar industry, we would pay an extra fee for that new gas furnace to pay back the extensive financial damage that gas causes. Council has implicitly recognized this injustice when it asked staff to investigate the Sue Big Oil campaign - Council knows that fossil fuel damage will be high.. But no. That payback word is used only for solar energy in order to depress meaningful solar action that just might depress the sale of fossil fuels. We pay a fee for recycling pop bottles.

I appreciate that staff want to wait and see BC Hydro’s new policies - a report is due in December. For example, Hydro may allow virtual net metering that would change the landscape for all of us. Even right now there is up to \$25,000 in solar panel funding from BC Hydro PLUS up to \$25,000 in funding for a battery backup that could help create a smart grid to carry us through when extreme weather events like wildfires and floods take out transmission lines - so things are happening. Get that news out to the public.

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We are all caught up in the enormous pressure and myths in society - do nothing, fossil fuels create jobs, money is more important than, well anything else, This staff/consultant report looks backwards in time instead of forward because it repeats outdated myths about solar. I too often include in my public workshops); for example, I have used language about payback for solar energy in my effort to motivate citizens.

CAEP Goal 9 Build local Starting in 2030 at the latest, install net metered solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on all new buildings, supplying at least 10% of their electric load.- coordinate renewable energy incentive programs, and provide renewable energy education.

GOAL 10 Establish and/or work with local renewable energy cooperatives (RECs) to advance solar energy systems and other renewable energy efforts of the CAEP.