

# LATE DISTRIBUTION FOR COUNCIL - FEBRUARY 26, 2008

# UB-2(i)



SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

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## MEMORANDUM

February 21, 2008

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Judy Rogers, City Manager  
James Ridge, Deputy City Manager  
Jody Andrews, Deputy City Manager  
Syd Baxter, City Clerk  
Laurie Best, Director of Corporate Communications  
Jennifer Young, Assistant Director of Corporate Communications  
Garrick Bradshaw, Director, Facility Design and Management  
Piet Rudgers, Director, Planning & Operations, Park Board  
Ian Harvey, Supervisor of Maintenance Management, Major Maintenance

FROM: Melina Scholefield, Manager Sustainability Group

SUBJECT: City of Vancouver Participation in Earth Hour, March 29, 2008, 8-9 pm

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Earth Hour is a global initiative put on by the World Wildlife Federation (WWF), encouraging people around the world to turn lights off for one hour, starting at 8 pm on March 29, 2008. This initiative has received a fair amount of media and public attention. This initiative first took place last year in Sydney, Australia, and is expanding to other cities worldwide, including Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, for the second annual effort. BC Hydro, which has conducted two similar "Turn it Off" campaigns in the past year, also intends to promote the Earth Hour initiative to their customers.

While the event is unlikely to make a significant reduction in Vancouver's overall energy consumption, and particularly our greenhouse gas emissions (due to the low-carbon intensity of our electricity), this is a worthwhile event to encourage awareness about conservation among our citizens and businesses.

Staff in the Sustainability Group and from Facilities have been coordinating regarding actions we can take to support this event. Planned actions include:

- Shutting down interior and exterior lights (except for emergency lights) in City Hall, the East Wing and the VanCity building, including the Olympic Flag lighting and the City Hall Clock;
- Working with IT and sending notices to staff asking them to shut down their computers;
- Communicating with staff through the Citywire internal site and payroll statements to about participating at home;
- Encouraging residents to participate through our regular One Day program communications. In addition to turning out their lights, residents will be encouraged to refrain from using appliances and to unplug unused electronic equipment. Of the total energy used in the average home, including natural gas for heating and hot water and electricity, appliance use accounts for approximately 16% of consumption, while lighting accounts for 6% and standby power accounts for approximately 2%.

The level of participation planned by different cities varies. The City of Toronto is a major partner in the initiative and is providing funds. Promoting electricity reduction is a key part of their Climate Change Action Plan, as the primary source of energy for their electricity comes from coal-fired power plants. Consequently, their electricity is significantly more carbon-intensive than in Vancouver. The City of Toronto also owns their electric utility and so will benefit directly from any electricity conservation activities.

While electricity consumption is a relatively small component of Vancouver's carbon footprint, staff believe this is a worthwhile initiative to support awareness around reducing our energy consumption.

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