

MOTION

6. Accountability for Climate Change

At the Regular Council meeting on June 25, 2019, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on June 26, 2019, to hear from speakers, with a start time of 3 pm.

Submitted by: Councillors Swanson and Boyle

WHEREAS

1. Through their own emissions and emissions from their products, 90 entities (primarily fossil fuel companies) are collectively responsible for almost two thirds of human-caused greenhouse gases (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-013-0986-y>);
2. To deal with sea-level rise alone, the City of Vancouver expects to pay \$1 billion, and Metro Vancouver municipalities as a whole \$9.5 billion, between now and 2100 ([Vancouver Courier](#), [Vancouver Sun](#));
3. To mitigate the effects of climate change and to help limit global warming to 1.5°C, Vancouver has adopted a Climate Emergency Response, which includes funding its own target of being carbon neutral before 2050 as well as “helping developing jurisdictions transition to renewable energy” ([Climate Emergency Response](#), p. 8);
4. Fossil fuel companies have not had to pay or be accountable for their share of the damage that communities and municipalities, including Vancouver, must now pay to prepare for and recover from;
5. BC has enacted legislation that holds opioid and tobacco producers liable for health care costs and could do the same for fossil fuel producers ([Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act](#) and [Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act](#));
6. Over [20 municipalities and regional districts](#) in BC have sent letters
 - a. to Provincial and Federal governments to push for legislation to hold fossil fuel producers strictly liable for climate-related harms if the producer is responsible for greenhouse gas emissions at a globally detectable level; and/or
 - b. to 20 of the world’s largest fossil fuel companies asking that these companies pay a fair share of local costs, referencing climate impacts including, but not limited to, sea level rise, infrastructure changes, and increased wildfire, and the percent responsible according to their percent of emissions calculated in the 2013

paper [“Tracing Anthropogenic Carbon Dioxide and Methane Emissions to Fossil Fuel and Cement Producers, 1854-2010”](#)
(updated by the author to 2013).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change and BC's Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to request that they enact legislation holding fossil fuel companies liable for climate-related harms caused by their contributions to climate change, providing Ontario's "[Liability for Climate Related Harms](#)" Bill as sample framework.
- B. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the 20 fossil fuel companies with the highest percentage of greenhouse gas emissions to ask that they be accountable for their share of climate emergency costs-templates and letters sent by other municipalities are available [online](#).
- C. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, reach out to local governments in BC and across Canada (including Victoria and Toronto) to investigate cooperation and partnership, including potential shared legal strategies, to recover local climate-related costs associated with the products of global fossil fuel companies.
- D. THAT Council support calls in the Union of BC Municipality motions for:
 - a. sending climate accountability letters to the 20 largest fossil fuel companies; and/or
 - b. asking the federal and provincial governments to enact laws to clarify the right of local governments to recover a fair share of their climate costs from fossil fuel companies.

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