

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**

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**SUBJECT**     **Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership Steering Committee – Funding Request**

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To seek Board direction on a funding request from the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership Steering Committee.

**BACKGROUND**

Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (VICC) Climate Leadership Steering Committee consists of mainly local government elected officials from across Vancouver Island and surrounding coastal communities. As noted in the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee's draft terms of reference dated July 13, 2023 (Appendix A), the mandate of this group is "to support effective and cohesive climate action across the VICC region by acting as an inter-regional network convener, facilitator, and advocate." Director Thompson is the Capital Regional District's (CRD) appointed representative on the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee.

On October 12, 2022, the Board approved a \$73,150 funding request from the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee to support the completion of a Vancouver Island Climate Leadership Plan. The funding was not ultimately provided, as the scope of work did not materialize as proposed, in part due to lack of other regional district funding partners, and changing priorities of the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee after the fall 2022 election.

The VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee co-chairs have sent a renewed one-time funding request to the CRD Board and Chair (Appendix A). Separate requests have been sent to all other regional districts on Vancouver Island. The revised funding amounts are based mainly on population, with the CRD's share totalling \$31,500. As noted in Appendix A, the funding would be provided to the Community Energy Association (CEA) to act as a secretariat for the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee and to support the execution of the following key deliverables between late 2022 and the end of 2024:

- organize annual summit of elected officials, staff, non-governmental organizations and businesses for information sharing, relationship building, identifying collaboration opportunities, and advocacy prioritization
- maintain quarterly steering committee meetings as a strategic planning body
- liaise with CEA's staff peer network to share best practices and support collaborative initiatives
- develop a digital resource library for sharing best practices, data and new initiatives
- facilitate and administer functional working groups based on shared priorities
- engage in senior government level advocacy based on climate action advocacy priorities identified through the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee and Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities
- continued relationship building with Indigenous communities across VICC

Following the initial request, various regional district staff communicated to CEA and the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee that most regional districts do not have climate action services and associated regional funding allocations and may not be the appropriate funder for this initiative. As such, VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee and CEA will reevaluate the funding model upon conclusion of this funding period.

To date, five regional districts have approved the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee's funding request (Comox Valley, qathet, Sunshine Coast, Alberni-Clayoquot and newly-approved Mount Waddington).

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the CRD provide \$31,500 to the Community Energy Association to act as a secretariat and support priority initiatives of the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership Steering Committee through 2024.

### *Alternative 2*

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The CRD Climate Action Strategy (2021) outlines goals and corporate and regionally-focused actions for the organization to complete through 2025. This request may support the intention of Action 2-6 to "coordinate regional climate action, collaboration and capacity building among local governments and interested First Nations."

### *Financial Implications*

The VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee is seeking a total of \$107,500 from regional districts located on Vancouver Island to support their initiatives through 2024. The CRD's allocated share is \$31,500. Funding for this initiative would be provided through existing 2023 program budgets of the regional climate action service.

Staff are also providing in-kind support to a new Vancouver Island and surrounding communities staff-focused peer network noted above. This is also administered by CEA and currently funded by BC Hydro. The CRD's Manager of Climate Action Programs is currently acting as a co-chair.

### *Intergovernmental Implications*

The CRD Climate Action Service has a mandate to support regional collaboration on climate action. To do so, staff work directly with municipal and electoral area staff and elected officials on collaborative policy initiatives, data and research collection, regional programs, information sharing and capacity building, and support Board advocacy efforts. Staff also participate in numerous provincial-scale local government focused peer networks to support this work.

The intention of the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee is, in part, to develop an elected official network at a broader geographical scale, and to support communities and regions advance climate priorities that currently do not have similar capacity to the capital region.

**CONCLUSION**

The CRD Board and Chair received a request from the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (VICC) Climate Leadership Steering Committee for funding support towards priority initiatives through 2024. This funding would aid the VICC Steering Climate Leadership Steering Committee, which mainly consists of local elected officials spanning Vancouver Island and surrounding communities, to achieve its mandate to convene, facilitate, and advocate for effective and cohesive climate action across the region.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the CRD provide \$31,500 to the Community Energy Association to act as a secretariat and support priority initiatives of the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership Steering Committee through 2024.

Submitted by:	Nikki Elliott, BES, MPA, Manager, Climate Action Programs
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Nelson Chan, MBA, FCPA, FCMA, Chief Financial Officer
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A: Funding Request Letter to CRD Chair and Board – July 24, 2023