



Memo to Council

Date: February 13, 2024
Subject: Youth Climate Corps – Advocacy Motion from Councillors Agtarap and Lubik

THAT the memo dated February 13, 2024, from the offices of Councillors Agtarap and Lubik regarding advocacy for an expanded role of provincial Youth Climate Corps be received for information.

AND THAT Council advance the following resolution to LMLGA and UBCM for the 2024 conventions:

WHEREAS municipalities recognize the urgent need to address climate change and the impact that climate change is having on communities through extreme weather such as wildfires, floods, extreme heat, which is causing major infrastructure damage and loss of life to residents; and

WHEREAS there is a need to engage young people by local governments, and train the next generation of low carbon sector workers and leaders;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT LMLGA and UBCM advocate to the Province of British Columbia for an expanded Youth Climate Corps that will provide green living wage jobs and training to young adults to support important work on climate adaptation and mitigation projects in their own communities, such as wildfire mitigation, building retrofits, ecosystem restoration and community engagement.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province work with local governments, Indigenous communities and nations, youth groups, industry, union associations and environmental organizations to scale up, design programming and provide resources for a BC-wide Youth Climate Corps.

Background

Youth Climate Corps (YCC) is an employment service program that often partners with local governments to foster climate resilience and a livable, low-carbon future while paying young people a living wage. YCC provides a motivated, organized, and adaptable youth labour force to make climate plans a reality by accelerating implementation through their programming. YCC's approach is relational and community-led. Programming amplifies projects and priorities

identified by the communities in which YYC members are connected through partnerships with non-profit grassroots organizations, Indigenous communities, and local governments.

BC is forecasting that over 600,000 workers will leave the workforce in the next decade, and there will be over 1 million job openings in the next decade. Many of these jobs will require specific job training to fill. Young people have a unique perspective to the climate crisis, as they have contributed the least to it, yet will be impacted the most through their lifetimes.

A significant amount of work needs to be done at the local level to prepare communities for the impacts of climate change, while reducing emissions. The increased events and impacts include wildfires, atmospheric rivers, water scarcity and drought, heat waves, flooding and sea level rise, and ecosystem changes. Much of this work is already being led by local governments and further resourcing is needed. YYS also works to ensure an equity lens is included in this work and address community specific needs.

Ensuring dignified, meaningful climate action work accessible to youth across BC, YCC will be a part of global and community solutions that centres youth and a just transition. YCC is building a climate workforce to transform our communities into low-carbon and resilient to the destabilizing forces of climate change. Benefits include youth leadership training, job readiness, and agency building that empowers the next generation of community leaders, improves youth mental health, and gives young people meaningful, living wage jobs in their communities that align with their values.

Examples of YYC climate action projects completed:

- Wildfire mitigation,
- Community engagement and climate education,
- Bike training and bike valet,
- Food security projects in rural and urban settings,
- Ecosystem restoration,
- Fire smart support,
- Building retrofits,
- Network building in communities to improve resiliency, and
- Supporting residents in accessing retrofit incentives.

The YCC program has been run in BC since 2020, and has partnered with the City of Kamloops, the City of Nelson and the Regional District of Central Kootenay to deliver local government climate action programs. The program has served six communities across BC and completed over 7,000 working days of climate action and training. The programs include young people aged 17-30 working in cohorts of three to eight people over four to six months.

There needs to be an intentional effort to scale up climate action, increase capacity and funding to local governments for climate action, and ensure that young people are not left behind and benefit from the jobs that will emerge in the green economy. YYC can help fill this gap and support local governments in achieving climate related goals and completing related projects.