



## Report to Council

### From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

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Date: February 25, 2025  
Submitted by: Councillor Amy Lubik  
Subject: Tackling Energy Poverty and Increasing Workforce Capacity by working with Youth Climate Corps

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#### Purpose

To advocate for the BC government to work with Youth Climate Corps to scale up programs for retrofits to increase energy efficiency and thermal comforts and combat energy poverty.

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#### Recommended Resolution(s)

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**THAT the following resolution regarding THAT the following resolution regarding “Tackling Energy Poverty and Increasing Workforce Capacity by working with Youth Climate Corps” be endorsed by the City of Port Moody Council and that staff be directed to forward copies to the Premier of British Columbia, the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Minister of Energy and Mines and the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA), and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Annual Conventions as recommended by the report dated February 9, 2025 from Councillor Amy Lubik:**

**WHEREAS studies suggest that energy poverty affects up to 1 in 5 Canadian residents which is a risk to health, and energy retrofits would help with both health and affordability, as well as meeting BC’s climate goals;**

**AND WHEREAS there is not enough of a workforce to connect to and meet the needs of BC residents, especially those most vulnerable, and opportunities are needed to train and scale up works to meet there;**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province of BC expand the Youth Climate Corps program scale-up retrofits to address energy poverty while meeting the need to train and expand the required workforce and supplying well-paying jobs for youth.**

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## Discussion

The high cost of living is impacting people all over BC and Canada. People are finding it to harder to make ends meet as essentials such as housing, food, and energy increase in<sup>1</sup> cost. There are people across the province that will not turn on heat or cooling, if they have it, because it costs too much or if they do there is less to be spent on other essentials. According to a report by the Global news, “About 14 percent of households say they had to keep their dwelling at an “unsafe or uncomfortable temperature” for up to a month in the past 12 months because of high heating or cooling costs, StatCan reported. Lower-income households (18 per cent) were more likely than the high-income families (10 percent) to go this route.” A recent study from McGill suggests up to 1 in 5 Canadians experience energy poverty.<sup>2</sup> According to EnergyPoverty.ca<sup>3</sup>, by the Canadian Urban sustainability Practitioners, people who experience energy poverty deal with:

- *Discomfort from living in cold and drafty [or overly hot] homes.*
- *Disruptions from abrupt utility shutoffs.*
- *Sacrificing other essentials such as groceries and medication*
- *Increased incidence of respiratory illness in children and infants*
- *Higher stress and poor mental health outcomes for adults.*
- *Difficulty participating fully in community life.*

At the same time, we are in a climate crisis where we need to decrease our energy usage to meet BC’s climate goals; energy efficiency retrofits, especially those directed at those most vulnerable, would have the dual benefit of decreasing energy use while increasing affordability. Unfortunately, recent work for the Community Energy Association identified that there are serious challenges regarding limited contractor availability and knowledge, communication with contractors and customers and the need for energy advisors.<sup>4</sup> Energy Efficiency Canada has also identified a significant shortage of qualified workers to support the needed retrofits.

A proven program to scale up to meet all the above challenges is the Youth Climate Corps (YCC) Climate Friendly Homes Program.<sup>5</sup> It focuses on educating homeowners/ renters on climate-related topics, including available rebates, the benefits of heat pumps, creating healthy landscapes, and fostering community networks. Additionally, programs can support seniors by equipping them with resources to navigate extreme heat events and foster mutual aid networks within the community. Similar projects across BC have worked to train young workers to provide home audits and provide interventions, which can lower heating bills by hundreds of dollars per year. They have also found ways to work with non-profit housing providers, which not only helps with thermal comfort, but lowers their overhead.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/10060979/energy-costs-canada-statcan/>

<sup>2</sup> Riva, M., Kingunza Makasi, S., O’Sullivan, K.C. *et al.* Energy poverty: an overlooked determinant of health and climate resilience in Canada. *Can J Public Health* 114, 422–431 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-023-00741-0>

<sup>3</sup> <https://energypoverty.ca/mappingtool/>

<sup>4</sup> Husain (2023). [Contractor Constraints for Energy Efficiency Retrofits](#). Prepared for the Community Energy Association.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youthclimatecorps.com/yccmap/vancouver>

<sup>6</sup> Lubik, Simoni pers comm, February 2025

These programs have been successful in part because they have been working with local governments, who are trusted sources of information and support, and also because local government staff can support YCC in outreach efforts and connections to organizations and individuals who may benefit.

Port Moody has supported YCC in the past because they focus on community specific issues. In this case, we are advocating to expand a single proven program to lower emissions, bring down energy bills, and build the workforce we need for all local governments.

### **Other Option(s)**

THAT the report dated February 25, 2025, from Councillor Amy Lubik be received for information.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **Communications and Public Engagement Initiatives**

There are no communications or public engagement initiatives associated with the recommendations in this report.

### **Council Strategic Plan Goals**

The recommendations in this report align with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Strategic Goal 2.2– Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
- Strategic Goal 3.3 – Enhance community well being.