



Report to Council

From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

Date: February 13, 2020
Subject: Resubmission of LMLGA and UBCM Municipalities Resolution Regarding Greenhouse Gas Limits for New Buildings

Purpose

To resubmit an amended Union of British Columbia Municipalities resolution regarding greenhouse gas limits for new buildings and seek Council endorsement to advance the resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for consideration, as recommended by the Climate Action Committee (2019).

Recommendation

THAT the following resolution regarding Greenhouse Gas Limits for New Buildings be submitted to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association, for subsequent submission to the Union of BC Municipalities, as recommended in the report dated February 13, 2020 from Cllr. Lubik regarding Union of BC Municipalities Resolution - Greenhouse Gas Limits for New Buildings:

WHEREAS climate change is recognized to be an urgent concern requiring rapid decarbonization of energy across all sectors, including buildings, in order to achieve 45% GHG emissions reductions by 2030 and net-zero GHG emissions by mid-century, as noted by the IPCC Special Report on 1.5C;

AND WHEREAS the British Columbia Energy Step Code establishes targets for increasing energy efficiency of new construction, but these may not result in the necessary levels of GHG emissions reductions to support local government GHG reduction targets nor BC's legislated GHG emissions reduction targets;

AND WHEREAS new buildings can last for many decades and are difficult, expensive, and disruptive to retrofit for renewable energy after construction;

AND WHEREAS near-zero GHG emissions mechanical systems are well proven and can be cost-effectively incorporated in new buildings, while also improving efficiency;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province include GHG limits for new construction as an enforceable element in Division B of the British Columbia Building Code, including a pathway to achieve zero GHG emissions for new construction in a timeline commensurate with the science of climate change and BC's reduction targets;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province's goal in the CleanBC Plan to "make every new building constructed in BC "net-zero energy ready" by 2032" be revised to "make every new building constructed in BC "zero emissions" and "net-zero energy ready" by 2032";

AND THAT the Province liaise with staff at Association of Kootenay and Boundary Local Governments, North Central Local Government Association, Southern Interior Local Government Association to ensure that there are provisions in the GHG limits that take into account and support the unique circumstances faced by rural communities, such as, but not limited to, decisions to utilize local materials and alternative building *methods*.

Background

Last year council submitted a resolution regarding maximum emissions for newly constructed buildings; the step code is a step in the right direction, but if fossil fuel energy is used, such as “natural” gas, emissions can still be very high and though we can and have prioritized the low carbon energy (LCES) steps pathways, local governments do not have the power to legislate this. The LCES pathway emerged as a “patch-work” solution to address GHGs since the Step Code does not necessarily result in necessary GHG reductions.

This resolution was endorsed enthusiastically at the LMLGA level, but not endorsed by UBCM. Some of the pushback from the floor was that this did not meet the needs of rural communities. Concerns stated include that STEP Code itself is very urban-centric – rural cultures, for the most part, strive to be more self-reliant and both to utilize local materials and to experiment with alternative building methods (rammed earth, strawbale, etc.) – while STEP Code does not prohibit such approaches, it is definitely biased toward a more industrialized world-view that marginalizes many rural values. In a climate crisis it is important we try to understand differences in circumstance and find common ground; Since UBCM in 2019, Port Moody councillors have been working with councillors in Silverton, Nelson, and the Climate Caucus to amend the motion to take the unique circumstances of rural communities into account and gain wider support. The motion has been amended to reflect urban/ rural differences for resubmitting to LMLGA and UBCM.

By moving the UBCM resolution forward, it is the hope that the Province will create a framework that addresses both energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions and the need for patchwork solutions like the LCES pathway would be eliminated. An interesting example of a framework is the City of New York who has set carbon limits on many buildings. This type of

regulation sets a carbon cap on the entire building and allows the building owner/developer to decide what combination of energy efficiency and greenhouse gas targeting measures to use that fit each projects context. This reflects the balance between an envelope efficiency and mechanical system approach that BC has currently addresses separately, and may be an example of a more equitable solution.

It should be once again acknowledged that the original recommendation came through our dedicated staff and was endorsed by the Climate Action Committee. They are an integral part of Port Moody being a leader in climate action.

Discussion

The original motion that was sent to UBCM can be found in the report from the Climate Action Committee dated February 26, 2019 (**attachment 1**).

Other Option(s)

THAT the report dated February 13, 2020 from Councillor Amy Lubik regarding Resubmission of Lower Mainland Local Government Association and Union of British Columbia Municipalities resolution regarding greenhouse gas limits for new buildings be received for information.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

There are no communication and civic engagement initiatives associated with this report.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

This report aligns with Council's Strategic Plan objectives in the following areas:

- Climate emergency
- Regional Leadership
- Cooperation between other governments

Attachment(s)

1. Report dated February 26, 2019 from the Climate Action Committee regarding Union of BC Municipalities Resolution – Greenhous Gas Limits for New Buildings