

## DIGEST OF UBCM CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The UBCM Executive and membership are being asked to consider endorsing a Climate Change Action Charter at the 2007 Convention. The following digest outlines the previous policy positions taken by UBCM members during consideration of resolutions and policy papers addressing climate change related issues.

### POLICY REVIEW

As early as 1991, UBCM endorsed a resolution that foreshadowed ongoing support for taking action on climate change.

This resolution, entitled *Atmospheric Change Targets (1991-B21)*, called for the provincial government to:

*(b) take responsibility for all the carbon dioxide emissions of its citizens and to that end...commit itself to an initial reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 20% by the year 2005. This should be part of a program to address the problem of atmospheric change and use all measures within the government's power to reduce greenhouse gas concentrations...[and]*

*(d) pursue national agreements to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.*

The UBCM Executive sponsored a Special Resolution in 2001 (SR3) calling for:

*...the federal government, as part of its international commitment to reduce greenhouse gases, to provide the necessary funding and technical assistance needed for local government to monitor and develop air shed management plans to effectively managed local air quality problems.*

In recognition that this is both an urban and a rural issue, the NCMA Executive sponsored a resolution in 2003 on the *Effect of Climate Change on Rural Communities (B83)* which, in its introduction, stated that:

*...climate change patterns in northern British Columbia are already directly affecting economic activity in the northern rural, primarily resource-based communities.*

What we see is early UBCM support for, and continuing recognition of, the climate change problem as well as an acknowledgement of the need to take action.

Other resolutions have recommended specific actions, including:

- introducing enhanced emission levels for auto fuels and establishing emission level standards for backyard boiler appliances (2005-B28), as well as standards regulating outdoor solid fuel burning boilers (2005-B114);

- mandating that all gasoline contain a percentage of ethanol or methanol (1992-B96) and legislating that all vehicle fuels contain a correct percentage of cellulose ethanol by 2010 to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions (2006-B27);
- reforming the fuel tax structure for motor fuel blends containing ethanol or methanol manufactured in BC from renewable feedstocks (1998-B13);
- supporting funding for commuter highways for non-greenhouse gas emitting transportation such as that used by cyclists, roller bladers, cross country skiers, pedestrians and other forms of clean, non-motorized transportation, in their annual budgets, operations plans and capital improvement plans (2006-B110);
- strengthening federal air emissions regulations in the shipping sector, including considering requiring ships to use lower-sulphur fuels, reducing ship speeds in coastal waters, having ships plug into local electrical systems rather than running engines for power generation while docked (2004-B79);
- upholding Canada's responsibilities and taking a leadership role with regard to cross-border/trans-boundary air quality agreements (2006-B25; 2001-A7);
- regulating woodburning stoves and appliances due to their serious health and respiratory effects and possible contribution to the "greenhouse" effect (1989-A16);
- including the R2000 construction standard as an option in the British Columbia Building Code (2006-B111).

## **ENERGY POLICY**

Reducing energy use is a major opportunity for greenhouse gas reduction.

UBCM's 2001 Energy Paper, approved by the Convention, includes the following relevant policy recommendations:

That UBCM:

- Not support the removal of GST/PST on utility bills but that the provincial and federal governments consider using these tax revenues to promote energy conservation and alternative energy sources.
- Request that the utilities, federal and provincial governments provide funding, advice and tax incentives to all energy users who wish to undertake energy efficiency programs.
- Encourage the pursuit of alternative energy sources such as woodwaste, tidal, solar, district energy and geothermal as well as any other economically and environmentally feasible alternatives.
- Request that consideration be given to rate restructuring/stabilization or some

method of rewards and incentives instead of rebates to address the peaks which presently occur.

- Encourage the federal and provincial governments to work in concert with local governments to develop an energy strategy that would include:
  - an outline of the energy sources available;
  - alternative energy options to be pursued;
  - a conservation strategy;
  - a statement relating to domestic energy supply and relations with international governments;
  - long-term energy planning (ensuring reliability of the systems) as well as other issues including statements around air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

## **RESOLUTIONS DIRECTLY AFFECTING PROVINCIAL POLICY**

One recent example is resolution 2006-B145, which found its way into the 2007 Throne Speech. The resolution called for a moratorium on Dual Fuel Coal Biomass Generation Energy Plants and requested that the Province instead:

*...investigate industries that will have the least amount of impact on the environment and quality of life by applying the most advanced technology.*

In the 2007 Throne Speech, the Premier announced that, “effective immediately, BC will become the first jurisdiction in North America, if not the world, to require 100% carbon sequestration for any coal-fired electricity project.”

Likewise, resolution 2006-SR3, *Public Transit Trust*, requested:

*...that the Province of British Columbia commit to transfer to UBCM a minimum of \$52 million from the \$119 million federal Public Transit Trust for equitable distribution to local transit systems.*

On February 20, 2007, the Province announced, as part of its 2007/08 - 2009/10 Budget and Fiscal Plan, that it would flow \$52.5 million from the federal Public Transit Capital Trust to the UBCM in 2006/07 to help local governments reduce traffic congestion in urban areas, reduce carbon dioxide and other emissions, and invest in public transit infrastructure.

## **CONCLUSION**

UBCM members have recognized for many years the need for action on climate change – particularly greenhouse gas reduction.

The membership has advocated both high-level federal and provincial actions, as well as targeted actions, which reflects an implicit recognition that such actions must include local government consultation and participation.

## 2007 RESOLUTIONS

In 2007, the UBCM Convention will consider nine resolutions specifically related to climate change – more than in any other previous year. These include:

- 1) reducing emissions from outdoor solid fuel burning boilers (2007-B35; see also 2005-B14);
- 2) providing financial incentives to encourage energy efficiency and new technologies (2007-B33);
- 3) providing funding to assist in the development and implementation of climate change adaptation strategies (2007-B34);
- 4) supporting the research, development and implementation of CO<sup>2</sup> mitigation and sequestration from all fossil fuel generated electricity (2007-B129; see also 2006-B145);
- 5) enabling local governments to implement and require the energy efficiency standards called for in the Province's *Energy Efficient Buildings: A Plan for BC* (2007-B130);
- 6) creating incentives for local governments to become involved in independent power production (2007-B131);
- 7) reducing the provincial sales tax on fuel efficient vehicles (2007-B132);
- 8) providing funding for local air quality monitoring (2007-B133); and
- 9) reinstating the federal EnerGuide Program (2007-B177).

