

For Immediate Release – 12 April 2018

**Slocan, Castlegar, Sooke call on fossil fuel industry to pay for climate costs
Local government association to vote on climate accountability**

Letters will be sent by the City of Castlegar and Village of Slocan in the Kootenays and the District of Sooke on Vancouver Island to Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell and 17 other fossil fuel companies asking the companies to pay a fair share of their local climate change costs. In addition, the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) will vote this Saturday on whether to send its own letter to the same fossil fuel companies.

These three municipalities in very different parts of the province bring to ten the number of BC local governments sending these letters to fossil fuel corporations. Their actions collectively challenge the assumption that their taxpayers alone will pay for the costs of preparing for climate change.

“Fossil fuel companies cannot make massive profits, while outsourcing the costs of fossil fuels to our communities,” said Matthew Carroll, Executive Director of the West Kootenay EcoSociety, which had asked the Village of Slocan to send a letter. “We applaud Castlegar and Slocan, the first Kootenay municipalities to send climate accountability letters, for raising the role of the fossil fuel economy in the increased threats facing their communities – including landslides from extreme storms and a potential loss of drinking water from melting glaciers.”

Marilyn Sundeen, Sooke Team of Dogwood, was very pleased with Sooke Council’s Monday, April 9th unanimous vote to send the Climate Accountability Letter. She said, “The consequences of climate change and global warming are far reaching and there is evidence that oil companies knew of these disastrous possibilities many years ago. Sooke is holding them accountable for their share of climate damage, rather than leaving it to the taxpayer to bear the cost.”

“The vote also highlights the need to move to more sustainable and greener forms of energy in the immediate future,” added Sundeen. “The federal government need to support a sustainable future with financial initiatives – instead of propping up old industries like the oil companies and pipelines.”

This Friday and Saturday, at its annual conference, the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities are considering a resolution, put forward by the City of Victoria, will be considering a resolution to send its own climate accountability letter to the same 20 fossil fuel companies.

“It’s so exciting to see all of these communities – 5 in the past month alone – come forward to challenge the right of fossil fuel companies to offload the costs of their products onto our communities,” said Andrew Gage, Staff Lawyer with West Coast Environmental Law. “We hope that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities will continue the momentum and send a powerful message to the fossil fuel industry.”

The West Kootenay EcoSociety and Dogwood, along with West Coast Environmental Law, are just three of the more than 60 BC-based organizations that have called on BC local governments to send climate accountability letters and to consider future litigation against the fossil fuel industry.

According to polling commissioned by West Coast Environmental Law, 75% of British Columbians support their local government sending climate accountability letters. Fossil fuel pollution caused by the operations and products of just 20 major companies represents about 30% of human-caused greenhouse gases in the global atmosphere today.

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For more on communities that have sent Climate Accountability Letters, see
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