

DATE: April 9, 2019

FILE: 5280-15

TO: Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: **Woodstove Exchange Program Update**

Purpose

To provide an update on the Woodstove Exchange Program activities and related activities.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

None, this report is for information only.

Executive Summary

Air Quality has been identified as one of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board's corporate priorities. At the CVRD Board's March 12, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting, correspondence was received from Director Grant (attached as Appendix A), which includes the following requested action:

Director Grant's requested action:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Woodstove Exchange Program be amended as follows:

- rebates for exchanging to a new certified wood stove be increased to \$1,500 with a requirement for the recipient to attend a wood burning education session, rebates for exchanging to a new gas, propane or pellet stove be increased to \$2,000 and rebates for exchanging to an electric air-source heat pump be increased to \$3,500; and
- That rebates only be available in the specific areas of concern to be determined in consultation with Island Health and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy based on previous mobile air quality monitoring.

March 12, 2019 Committee of the Whole motion:

THAT the correspondence dated January 23, 2019 regarding amending the terms of the woodstove exchange program be deferred to the April 16, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Staff are providing the following program information and updates for additional context and consideration.

Regional Airshed Advisory Group

- Air quality in the Comox Valley continues to be a complex and significant issue that touches on many aspects of the community including health, the environment, income, housing density, and social norms. Because of this complexity, the approach to addressing the issues requires both a regulatory and communications and engagement approach from multiple jurisdictions working in coordination and collaboration.

- The Woodstove Exchange program is one small component of a more holistic approach required to address air quality issues.
- Staff recognize that there are financial barriers for many Comox Valley residents to switch from a wood burning appliance to a less-polluting primary heating source. There are many different approaches to address financial barriers that may be appropriate for the Comox Valley with wider public awareness and multi-jurisdictional support in place.
- These financial barriers and other issues around equity and income and the sensitivities around the culture of wood burning as a primary heating source will be best considered by the Regional Airshed Advisory Group.

Current Program Activities

- CVRD staff are working with Island Health and the Ministry of Environment to incorporate the recent grant from Island Health to increase the financial incentive for switching from a wood stove to a heat pump in areas identified as ‘hotspots’.
- Hotspot areas will be those with higher population density that have a high degree of wood smoke as identified during the 2017 UBC Mobile Monitoring air quality study.
- To support building public awareness, staff are developing a wood smoke reduction awareness campaign for 2019 that will include:
 - An ad campaign focusing on the health impact of wood smoke from wood stoves, responsible burning practices and drawing attention to financial incentives
 - Updating information about health impacts on the CVRD website
 - Updating information about responsible wood burning practices on the CVRD website
 - Rebranding the ‘Woodstove Exchange Program’ to ‘Wood Smoke Reduction Program’
 - Increasing education and outreach about health impacts, responsible burning practices, and increased incentives in ‘hotspot’ areas.
- Through the delivery of the wood smoke reduction awareness campaign as well as increased heat pump incentives and using a pilot project approach, staff will learn more about public perceptions and barriers to switching heating appliances and will report back in 2020.

In consideration of the above, should the board wish to modify the woodstove exchange program as per Director Grant’s motion or otherwise, these changes can be incorporated into the 2019 woodstove exchange program, and results and learning will be integrated into future program improvements.

Prepared by:

J. Meilleur

Jenn Meilleur
Project Coordinator - Transit
and Sustainability

Concurrence:

M. Zbarsky

Michael Zbarsky
Manager of Transit and
Sustainability

Concurrence:

D. DeMarzo

Doug DeMarzo
Acting General Manager of
Community Services

Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

City of Courtenay	✓
Town of Comox	✓
Village of Cumberland	✓
Island Health	✓
Ministry of Environment	✓

Appendix A – “Correspondence dated January 23, 2019 received from Director Grant”

File: 5280-15

January 23, 2019

Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole

Re: Woodstove Rebate Program

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) administers a woodstove exchange program that is available to households with any wood stove manufactured prior to 2014. Participation in the program includes switching to a new pellet, gas or propane heating appliance or installing an electric air-source heat pump;

The current rebate program provides \$250 for exchanging to a new certified wood stove, a \$600 rebate for exchanging to a new gas, propane or pellet stove and a \$1,000 rebate for exchanging to an electric air-source heat pump.

Through cooperative efforts between the CVRD, Island Health and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, an emissions inventory and mobile air quality monitoring has identified fine particulate matter levels in certain areas of the Comox Valley to be of particular concern during the winter months.

Island Health has committed an additional \$35,000 to this program specifically identified for rebates for exchanges to air-source heat pumps and for areas of the Comox Valley where air quality is of particular concern.

I respectfully ask for the board's consideration of the following

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Woodstove Exchange Program be amended as follows:

- rebates for exchanging to a new certified wood stove be increased to \$1,500 with a requirement for the recipient to attend a wood burning education session, rebates for exchanging to a new gas, propane or pellet stove be increased to \$2,000 and rebates for exchanging to an electric air-source heat pump be increased to \$3,500; and
- That rebates only be available in the specific areas of concern to be determined in consultation with Island Health and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy based on previous mobile air quality monitoring.

Respectfully,

K. Grant

Ken Grant
Director