

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

From: Administration

Date: December 4, 2023

Subject: Declaring a Climate Emergency

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receives this report for information.

BACKGROUND:

At the regular meeting of September 25, 2023 Council asked Administration to bring back a report detailing what declaring climate change as an emergency implies. Staff reviewed declarations from various municipalities and have compiled the considerations below. Additionally, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) summary report for policymakers, referenced in numerous declarations, has been included in the central table file for Council's further information.

DECLARING CLIMATE CHANGE AS AN EMERGENCY

The declaration of a climate change emergency by a British Columbia municipality signifies a commitment to address the urgent and critical challenges posed by climate change. This report explores the various implications and potential actions that follow such a declaration.

Policy and Legislative Changes: Upon declaring a climate change emergency, municipalities often prioritize the development and implementation of policies that align with climate action goals. This may involve revising existing regulations, setting emission reduction targets, and integrating climate considerations into municipal planning processes.

Community Engagement and Education: A crucial aspect of addressing climate change is fostering community awareness and engagement. Municipalities may launch educational campaigns, workshops, and initiatives to inform residents about the impacts of climate change and encourage sustainable practices.

Infrastructure and Resilience Planning: Municipalities may invest in infrastructure improvements to enhance resilience against climate-related risks. This could include upgrading

stormwater management systems, implementing green infrastructure, and developing strategies to adapt to changing weather patterns.

Economic Transition: The declaration of a climate change emergency often prompts municipalities to explore sustainable economic practices. This may involve supporting green businesses, incentivizing renewable energy projects, and transitioning away from environmentally harmful industries.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Municipalities are more likely to collaborate with regional, national, and international entities to share knowledge, resources, and best practices. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and other municipalities can amplify the impact of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Monitoring and Reporting: Municipalities declaring a climate change emergency typically establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress. Regular updates on emission reductions, climate adaptation measures, and other key indicators ensure transparency and accountability.

Budget Allocation and Funding Opportunities: A commitment to addressing climate change may lead to changes in budget priorities, with funds allocated for projects that contribute to sustainability and resilience. Municipalities may also seek external funding opportunities, grants, and partnerships to support ambitious climate action initiatives.

Legal Implications: Some municipalities may explore the legal aspects of their climate change emergency declaration, considering how it may impact land use planning, environmental regulations, and potential legal challenges from stakeholders.

SUMMARY

Declaring a climate change emergency in a British Columbia municipality is a way communities signify a proactive approach to addressing this issue. The implications outlined in this report highlight the multifaceted nature of municipal responses, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and collaborative efforts to create a sustainable and resilient future.

If Council decides not to pursue a declaration at this time, it's important to highlight that such a decision will not have an immediate impact on our current climate action funding received by the Province. The existing funding we've secured remains unaffected by this choice, emphasizing the autonomy and strategic approach the council can take in determining the best course of action. This declaration does not come with any additional financial support or access to resources not otherwise available at this time.

This decision, though independent, should be made with a long-term perspective, considering potential future opportunities and aligning with the overarching goals of our climate initiatives



outlined in documents such as the Official Community Plan and the Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan.

EXAMPLE MOTION

Therefore, be it resolved, that the District of Mackenzie officially declares a climate emergency for the purposes of identifying and deepening our commitment to protecting our economy, our ecosystems, and our community from global warming.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Community and Social Development

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

Environmental Sustainability

- The way we operate has an impact on the environment. We are committed to integrating sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governance factors (ESG) into our decision making and business practices.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Luke Thorne, Land and Environmental Coordinator

Reviewed By: Corporate and Financial Services

Approved By: Chief Administrative Officer