



Friday, April 28, 2023

# Chinook Winds Region - Proposal 2023

Submission Deadline: May 1, 2023

## Name of person submitting this proposal

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## Proposal Name

Get Rid of Greenhouse Gases (GROGG)

## Source

This proposal is being submitted on behalf of the Youth Council.

## Type of Proposal

Educational (I want the council to be informed)

For Conversation (I want the council to have a conversation)

For Decision (I want the council to make a decision or take an action)

## Background

*We are not alone, we live in God's world.*

The climate crisis is an ongoing concern for the spiritual and social lives of our communities & of the whole planet, with direct, negative consequences for the wellbeing of all living things. Our most vulnerable ecosystems and under-resourced communities bear the brunt of these effects today.

Therefore, taking action to reduce our contributions to the climate crisis is a direct embodiment of the Chinook Wind Regional Council's self-identified purpose of 'living in covenant with Mother Earth and All My Relations in the Earth community' and of the New Creed's commitment to 'live with respect in creation.'

The United Church of Canada is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 80% by 2030. The United Church commissioned "Caring for Creation, Our Communities, and Our Congregations: The Case for a National Carbon Reduction Program for Faith Buildings" in 2016 which found that energy use in buildings was one of the largest contributors to the United Church's carbon emissions and made several recommendations to address this.

The report operated based on estimates of building area and energy usage due to the lack of historical data or baseline for United Church carbon emissions. One of their critical recommendations was to establish such a baseline. A baseline understanding of current carbon emissions is required to create realistic action plans, concrete goals, and to accurately measure the effectiveness of carbon reduction initiatives.

The Youth Council finds that Regional Councils and individual Communities of Faith have a responsibility in tracking and reporting their emissions as a measure of accountability and a means to uncover opportunities to reduce those emissions. Creating a Regional baseline of the emissions produced by

buildings will provide the data needed to meet the 80% reduction target.

As the Regional Council has many remote staff and little building usage, tracking all the emissions produced in the course of Regional work, including transportation and waste, will provide a more accurate image of the Region's emissions.

The information gathered in these energy audits can also contribute to the wellness of the communities of faith that participate. Awareness of carbon emission sources often leads to financial savings through highlighting unnecessary/accidental energy use (which can be easily reduced) and by encouraging reduction programs, which can often be subsidized through grants and lead to less energy use or the use of greener and cheaper energy sources.

Communities of Faith are already required to submit annual reports to the Regional Council (as per section B.2.1.1 (b) of the Manual), providing a simple and streamlined mechanism for Communities to report on their energy consumption and emissions. Gathering this information at the Regional level will allow Regional staff to identify which communities might require energy efficiency support, making their resourcing more effective.

Youth Council believes that performing an energy audit of United Church buildings and Regional activities is the first step to creating an effective plan to combat our contributions to climate change. We are asking Communities of Faith to support us and join us to share in the call to care for creation and for each other.

## **Proposal**

That the Chinook Winds Regional Council perform an energy audit of emissions produce in the course of it's work (including Regional Gatherings, staff travel, events), including through buildings, transportation, and waste,

That the Chinook Winds Regional Council strongly encourages Communities of Faith to provide an energy audit to be included with their 2024 self-assessment/annual report provided to the Region.

That the Chinook Winds Regional Council report on it's carbon emissions and on all audits reported from Communities of Faith at the 2024 Regional Gathering.

## **Funding Implications**

We estimate the primary costs of this proposal will be the time and effort of Regional staff to audit and then track emissions. The human resources required to track data may be reduced through the use of partnerships with Faithful Footprints or the use of the Energy Star Portfolio Manager, an electronic tool to track and even automate the collection of utility data recommended and used by Faithful Footprints.

Some time may be required to connect communities with the resources available through Faithful Footprints or through provincial/federal grants. Fortunately, there are many grants to relieve the financial costs of energy audits, as well as for the costs of energy reductions.

There may be funding implications should the Region choose to implement financial incentives for Communities of Faith who undergo an energy audit (as recommended in the 2016 report).

## **Confirmation**

Proposal is complete and I am ready to submit it.