
To: Climate Action Committee

From: Nicole Chan, Project Engineer
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Parks and Environment Department

Date: January 20, 2021 Meeting Date: February 12, 2021

Subject: **Assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative**

RECOMMENDATION

That the MVRD Board:

- a) endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty as presented in the report dated January 20, 2021, titled “Assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative”; and
 - b) send letters urging the Canadian and BC governments to support the global initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is a global campaign intended to spur international cooperation on the responsible use of fossil fuels. Staff completed an assessment of this initiative at the direction of the Climate Action Committee. Metro Vancouver’s *Climate 2050* is strongly aligned with the principles underlying the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. The three key areas of focus are: ending new exploration and production of fossil fuels; phasing out existing stockpiles and production; and fast-tracking real solutions for a peaceful and just transition.

While it is difficult to predict the impact of the proposed treaty and associated public campaign, it has the potential to contribute towards the development of global policies that limit fossil fuel use and raise public awareness. Based on this assessment, staff recommend that the MVRD Board endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Direct actions related to limiting fossil fuel use are already being considered within the development of the *Climate 2050 Roadmaps*.

PURPOSE

To provide the Climate Action Committee with an assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative and recommend a course of action for Metro Vancouver.

BACKGROUND

At its November 13, 2020 meeting, the Committee received a delegation regarding the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT) and the Cities Standing Against Fossil Fuel Expansion (SAFE) initiative (see Reference). The Committee subsequently passed the motion:

That the Climate Action Committee direct staff to report back with an assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and recommendations for Metro Vancouver's involvement.

This report responds to the Committee’s direction.

FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY INITIATIVE

The FFNPT Initiative intends to spur international co-operation on the responsible use of fossil fuels in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) target of limiting global warming below 1.5°C and on a peaceful and just transition to a sustainable future. The treaty is modelled on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and calls for international cooperation in three key areas:

- Non-Proliferation: End all new exploration and production of coal, oil and gas
- Global Disarmament: Phase-out existing stockpiles and production of fossil fuels in line with maintaining warming below 1.5°C
- Peaceful Transition: Fast-tracking real solutions for a peaceful and just transition through a proactive plan to enable economic diversification, implement renewable energy and other reliable, cost-effective low carbon solutions and support every worker, community and country.

Metro Vancouver's *Climate 2050* is strongly aligned with the intent of the treaty to limit fossil fuel usage in alignment with the IPCC target of limiting global warming below 1.5°C. Metro Vancouver has adopted greenhouse gas reduction targets of 45% reduction by 2030, compared to 2010 levels, and carbon neutrality by 2050 within the *Climate 2050 Strategic Framework*, in alignment with the *IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*. The UN Environment Programme's *Production Gap Report 2020* highlights that around the world, countries planned fossil fuel production levels by 2030 are 120% higher than would be consistent with limiting global warming below 1.5°C. Transitioning away from fossil fuels is essential to reaching the IPCC target and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF A FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

The FFNPT Initiative makes the case that such a treaty could constructively contribute towards curbing global fossil fuel non-proliferation. However, it is difficult to assess whether a FFNPT would be effective in its stated ambitions, given uncertainty about how the treaty would be developed and implemented. To examine the question of effectiveness, staff considered the impact of the historic nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT was developed to contain the expansion of nuclear weapons and nuclear states, and entered into force in 1970. The NPT is considered a landmark international treaty and has close to universal participation amongst world nations. Signatories of the NPT have been shown to be less likely to initiate nuclear weapons programs, but it is unclear whether a causal relationship exists between these actions and the NPT. Scholars who have studied the NPT hold varying viewpoints about whether it has been effective at curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Some scholars argue that the NPT has played a pivotal role in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons whereas others argue that countries were already taking action to limit proliferation of these dangerous weapons prior to ratifying the NPT. Staff's conclusion is that while it is difficult to completely quantify the effect, international non-proliferation treaties have the potential to have a positive effect towards achieving their stated ambitions.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE CALL FOR A FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Currently, the FFNPT Initiative is seeking endorsement of the call for a treaty from local governments, with the goal of building the public profile of the campaign and putting pressure on national governments to sign and ratify a treaty. The campaign calls for two key actions from local

governments: endorsement of the call for a treaty, and a commitment to implementing fossil fuel non-proliferation actions. The campaign was launched during Climate Week NYC in September 2020. To date, more than 180 organizations, over 7,000 individuals and two local governments (City of Vancouver and Amber Valley Borough Council, UK) have endorsed the call for a treaty. The City of New York, Los Angeles and Barcelona are actively considering motions to endorse. Organizational support is cross-cutting and international, including:

- Wilderness Committee
- Comox Valley Council of Canadians
- Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan Expansion (BROKE)
- UK Youth Climate Coalition
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers
- Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania

Should the FFNPT initiative be successful, it could raise public awareness and engagement levels on fossil fuel non-proliferation. Given that the endorsement of a call for a treaty would require minimal staff time, have a potential positive effect on limiting fossil fuel use and is in alignment with the principles of *Climate 2050*, staff recommend that Metro Vancouver endorse the call for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty.

CLIMATE 2050 AND SAFE CITIES POLICIES

The delegation also presented on the Cities Standing Against Fossil Fuel Expansion initiative (SAFE), a movement to keep local communities safe from fossil fuels. SAFE policies have four categories: local government resolutions on fossil fuel non-proliferation, electrification policies, temporary restrictions and permanent restrictions on new fossil fuel infrastructure. Metro Vancouver is already considering policies and actions that are aligned with SAFE within the *Climate 2050 Roadmaps*, such as prioritizing electrification of new buildings. The *Energy Roadmap*, which is the subject of Report 5.1 in the Climate Action Committee's February 2021 meeting agenda package, will also be considering actions to limit expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure. Given that fossil fuel non-proliferation policies are already being considered within the *Climate 2050 Roadmaps*, no additional action on this item is required.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the MVRD Board:
 - a) endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty as presented in the report dated January 20, 2021, titled "Assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative"; and
 - b) send letters urging the Canadian and BC governments to support the global initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.
2. That the Climate Action Committee receive for information the report dated January 20, 2021, titled "Assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative", and provide alternate direction to staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to this report. Under Alternative 1, Metro Vancouver would join a growing list of local governments that have endorsed the call for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. The treaty itself aligns with Metro Vancouver's *Climate 2050* goals and *Roadmaps*, and has the potential to raise public awareness. Staff resources are not impacted since efforts to implement actions related to fossil fuel non-proliferation are already being considered as part of the *Climate 2050 Roadmaps*.

CONCLUSION

At its November meeting, the Climate Action Committee received a delegation from representatives of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. At the direction of the Committee, Metro Vancouver staff have conducted an assessment of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. This initiative is strongly aligned with the principles of *Climate 2050* and endorsing the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty could have a positive effect on limiting fossil fuel non-proliferation and raising public awareness and engagement.

Staff recommend Alternative 1, that the MVRD Board endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and send letters urging the Canadian and BC governments to support the global initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

References

[Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative](#)

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