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# Balanced Approach Needed for Energy, Housing Affordability

In 2020, the Capital Regional District (CRD) announced an agreement where FortisBC would purchase Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) generated from Hartland Landfill for its natural gas distribution system.

A joint CRD/FortisBC news release says, “The project is expected to reduce the region’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by approximately 264,000 tonnes...over the 25-year project life, the equivalent of removing 2,240 cars from the road for 25 years...RNG is a carbon-neutral energy made from capturing and upgrading the biogas released from decomposing organic waste in the landfill.”

The project will cost millions of dollars and is dependent on FortisBC being able to sell and distribute the gas. FortisBC is required to construct an extension to bring their distribution network to the Hartland Landfill.

While there are significant costs involved, this is a win-win-win for the CRD, FortisBC and the planet.

However, the CRD and some of their municipal representatives are undermining their own project.

The CRD has launched an initiative to discourage homeowners from using natural gas and therefore, RNG. They plan to require the highest levels of the BC Step Code for new homebuyers choosing to heat their homes with gas. The highest

Step Code level adds \$80,000+ to the cost of a new home.

In addition, some municipalities are offering \$350 rebates for homeowners that “switch from a fossil fuel (oil, natural gas or propane) space heating system to an electric air-source heat pump...”

The municipalities don’t mention homeowners save money using 100% RNG from the biogas in the landfill.

So, the CRD and some municipalities at the CRD Board are undermining their own, taxpayer-funded sustainability project with policies and rebates that discourage the sale of RNG.

If FortisBC can’t sell the gas, how will they recoup their investment? How will the CRD, municipalities, and ultimately taxpayers, pay for the project? How will GHG emissions be reduced by 264,000 tonnes?

The CRD and their municipal representatives must recognize that energy security for Canada, including our region, requires balance.

We can responsibly address climate change and secure our energy needs through both electric and renewable gas initiatives like the Hartland Landfill project.

Balance will also contribute to more housing affordability.



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