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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, Victoria and Saanich councils are undermining their own project.

They have launched an initiative to discourage homeowners from using natural gas and therefore, RNG. In 2025, they plan to

require the highest level 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.

They are undermining their own, taxpayer-funded sustainability project discouraging the sale of RNG, which they admit in their news release is carbon neutral.

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, Victoria, Saanich and other municipalities must recognize that energy security and affordability require balance.

Some countries are undergoing an energy crisis. Britain’s average household energy bills are set to double to about 4,000 pounds (\$6,143) by January.

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

This balance will also contribute to more housing affordability.



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