2022 Election Candidate Questionnaire

Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley — Air Quality & Health Survey

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Q1 Every winter, the Comox Valley experiences poor air quality due to high levels of fine particulate matter from wood stoves, frequently breaking BC Air Quality Objectives. Everyone's health can be impacted, particularly children, seniors, and vulnerable populations.

Are you concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people's health?

Response: **Yes.**

Q2 The Comox Valley Airshed Roundtable Action Plan targets reductions in wood-burning emissions, transitions in densely populated areas, reduced yard waste burning, and expanded particulate research.

If elected, will you work toward fulfilling the 2023 Comox Valley Airshed Roundtable Action Plan?

I support the Strategy's vision and most of its action areas. Reducing emissions from existing appliances, cutting recreational and yard waste burning, addressing non-residential open burning, expanding PM2.5 data collection, and stepping up education are all steps I'd work to advance if elected.

Where I'd want to look more closely is Action 2 — transitioning away from wood-burning appliances in densely populated areas. That's likely to mean new bylaws and costs for residents who rely on wood heat, including as backup during power outages. I'd want to see implementation details and hear from affected residents before committing to a specific approach, but the overall direction — cleaner air for the Valley — is one I support.

Q3 Municipal bylaws currently prevent wood stoves in new construction, and in Comox and Courtenay, prohibit new installations in existing homes without them, effectively capping total wood stoves.

If elected, will you strengthen and build on your municipality's "no new installation" bylaws to prevent the increase in wood burning appliances?

I support the intent behind the existing "no new installation" bylaws — capping wood-burning appliances is a reasonable way to keep the problem from worsening while solutions develop. Whether I'd support strengthening them further would be informed by health data, cost and availability of alternatives, and resident feedback.

Importantly, any strengthened bylaw must account for emergency backup heat. Heat pumps rely on the grid, which fails during major winter storms. A bylaw closing off wood stoves entirely without emergency-use provisions could leave families without safe heating. I'd want this addressed directly — via emergency exemptions or support for off-grid alternatives — before supporting further restrictions.

Q4 While summer wildfire smoke is tied to broader climate issues, reducing winter wood smoke hazards is directly within local reach.

If elected, what will you do to reduce winter wood smoke pollution in the Comox Valley?

I support the Strategy's core actions: reducing emissions from existing appliances, cutting recreational/yard waste burning, expanding data collection, and stepping up public education. I support maintaining current "no new installation" bylaws, with open consideration for strengthening if emergency off-grid heating needs are safeguarded.

Additionally, I support incentives to help households replace old, high-emission stoves with cleaner options—prioritizing PM2.5 hotspots and ensuring costs are not a barrier for lower-income households.

> *We respectfully acknowledge that this work takes place within the unceded traditional territory of the K'òmoks First Nation. Questionnaire conducted by Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley (breathecleanair.ca).*