



**City of Richmond**

**Report to Committee**

**To:** Community Safety Committee

*To Community Safety - June 15, 2004*  
**Date:** May 22, 2004

**From:** Suzanne Bycraft  
Manager, Emergency & Environmental Programs

**File:** 10-6175-02-01

**Re:** **Canada-US Air Quality Agreement - Request to Support the Inclusion of the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Airshed**

**Staff Recommendation**

1. That Richmond City Council send a letter to the Minister of Environment and US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator advising of the City's support for the inclusion of the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed under a new or existing Annex to the Canada/US Air Quality Agreement
2. That copies of the letter be sent to the Fraser Valley Regional District, the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

Suzanne Bycraft  
Manager, Emergency & Environmental Programs  
(3338)

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES 	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

Richmond City Council received a letter from the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) requesting that the City support their position that the shared Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed be included in a new or existing Annex to the Canada/US Air Quality Agreement (a copy of this letter is provided in Attachment 1). This report recommends that Council support this request.

### **Background**

Air pollutants released at one location can travel long distances, affecting air quality at their sources as well as many miles away. In order to reduce transboundary air pollution, the Canada and the US signed an Air Quality Agreement in 1991.

This Agreement established a foundation for improved cooperative efforts, strengthened management and commitment by both countries to reduce emissions.

In December 2000, Annex 3 was added to the Agreement. This Ozone Annex established legally binding emission reductions for specific air contaminants which produce ground-level ozone – a key pollutant of concern. However, the emission reductions are only applicable in specific areas, which in Canada include central and southern Ontario and southern Quebec. The Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed, of which the Lower Mainland is a part, is not included. The Ozone Annex is being re-negotiated this year.

Presently, there exists a voluntary effort amongst government agencies at various levels (federal, provincial, regional, First Nations) from Canada and the US to strengthen airshed management of the Georgia Basin Puget Sound. To-date, effort has focused on establishing inter-jurisdictional relations, improving understanding of current quality of the shared airshed and respective agency priorities, and facilitating better information sharing. However, this initiative is entirely voluntary and conditional upon each agency's individual commitment, level of interest and available resources.

It is anticipated that inclusion of the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed into a new or existing annex to the Canada/US Air Quality Agreement would provide the resources and legal backing to strengthen and advance current efforts.

### **Analysis**

Richmond City Council have actively lobbied and undertaken several initiatives in support of strengthening air quality management (Attachment 2). In particular, based on experience with major energy facility proposals in the United States, the City of Richmond has advocated for strengthened transboundary management to ensure that decision-making adequately addresses human health concerns and takes into account potential cumulative impacts.

In recognition:

- that the transboundary management of the shared Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed requires strengthening; and,
- it is anticipated that the inclusion of the regional airshed in the US-Canada Air Quality Agreement would strengthen commitment, establish formal emission reduction objectives and help direct federal resources to assist in meeting transboundary regional air quality objective,

staff recommend that Council support the Fraser Valley Regional District in its effort to include the Georgia Basin Puget Sound airshed in the US-Canada Air Quality Agreement.

### **Financial Impact**

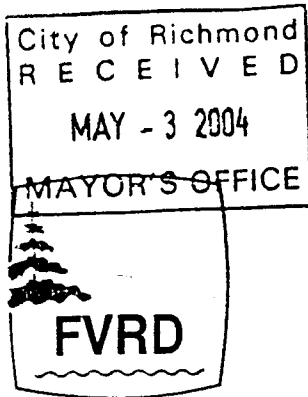
There is no direct cost to the City associated with supporting the FVRD request.

### **Conclusion**

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) have requested that the City of Richmond support their position that the shared Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed be included in a new or existing Annex to the Canada/US Air Quality Agreement. It is anticipated that the inclusion of the regional airshed in the US-Canada Air Quality Agreement would strengthen current voluntary initiatives by establishing formal commitment and providing federal resources. This report recommends that Council convey their support by sending a letter to the Minister of Environment and US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator.



Margot Daykin, M.R.M  
Assistant Manager - Environmental Programs  
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MD:md



## Fraser Valley Regional District

45950 Cheam Avenue, Chilliwack, British Columbia V2P 1N6  
 Phone: 604-702-5000 Toll Free: 1-800-528-0061 (BC only)  
 Fax: 604-792-9684 website: www.fvrd.bc.ca

April 30, 2004

9050-20-058

Letter to:

Whatcom County Council – Chair Dan McShane

GVRD Chair, Marvin Hunt  
 Village of Anmore – Mayor Hal Weinberg  
 Village of Belcarra – Mayor Ralph Drew  
 Bowen Island Municipality – Mayor Lisa Barrett  
 City of Burnaby – Mayor Derek Corrigan  
 City of Coquitlam – Mayor Jon Kingsbury  
 Corporation of Delta – Mayor Lois Jackson  
 City of Langley – Mayor Marlene Grinnell  
 Township of Langley – Mayor Kurt Alberts  
 Village of Lions Bay – Mayor Douglas Miller  
 District of Maple Ridge – Mayor Kathy Morse

City of Abbotsford – Mayor Mary Reeves  
 City of Chilliwack – Mayor Clint Hames  
 Village of Harrison Hot Springs – Mayor John Allen

City of New Westminster – Mayor Wayne Wright  
 City of North Vancouver – Mayor Barbara Sharp  
 District of North Vancouver – Mayor Don Bell  
 District of Pitt Meadows – Mayor Don MacLean  
 City of Port Coquitlam – Mayor Scott Young  
 City of Port Moody – Mayor Joe Trasolini  
 City of Richmond – Mayor Malcolm Brodie  
 City of Surrey – Mayor Doug McCallum  
 City of Vancouver – Mayor Larry Campbell  
 District of West Vancouver – Mayor Ron Wood  
 City of White Rock – Mayor Judy Forster

District of Mission – Mayor Abe Neufeld  
 District of Kent – Mayor Sylvia Pranger  
 District of Hope – Mayor Gordon Poole

Dear Chairpersons and Mayors:

For the past 3 years, representatives from the FVRD, GVRD, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Environment Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Dept. of Ecology, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Northwest Air Pollution Agency, and First Nations and Tribes have been meeting in an effort to develop an air quality strategy for the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound (GB/PS) airshed. This area includes the coastal region roughly from Campbell River and Whistler in the north to Olympia, Washington in the south, including the shared Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Lower Fraser Valley airshed is included in this area.

In part, the above work has included a project to characterize the GB/PS airshed, thereby determining, to the greatest degree possible with existing tools, the need for such a strategy. The results show that there is significant transboundary transport of air pollutants from Puget Sound into the Georgia Basin (including the Fraser Valley) and vice versa. While there appear to be some similar as well as unique sources of air pollution in these areas, the human health impact research conducted to date, such as the recent BC Lung Association Health and Air quality study, has yet to identify

ambient air quality levels for particulate matter and ozone, the air pollutants of most concern, that are considered to be safe.

In a March, 2003 letter to Governor Gary Locke of Washington State and BC Premier Gordon Campbell, the Canadian and US Section Chairs of the International Joint Commission supported a joint concern by the IJC's International Air Quality Advisory Board and its Health Professionals Task Force regarding the lack of a binational, coordinated process for projects that potentially have transboundary impacts. They went on to support the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy development process.

In 1991, the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement was signed by the federal Minister of Environment and the Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency. Then in December, 2000 an Ozone Annex was added to this Agreement. The Annex spells out commitments by the US and Canada for the reduction of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (precursors to the formation of ozone in the air) in 18 northeast states, the District of Columbia and southern Ontario and Quebec. It also specifies, in part, that this Annex is to be reviewed in mid-2004 to determine whether or not southern British Columbia and the US Pacific Northwest (i.e. the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound airshed) should be added as a western component. Another option is for a separate annex under the Agreement to be developed which focuses on the GB/PS airshed.

If this area is recognized in an annex to the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement, specific actions by both countries would be identified and, as was the case for the Ozone Annex, resources would be made available for their completion. Implementation of anything less, such as formal agreement by the above agencies, would be limited to the extent that the authority to develop and implement international management plans, which is the prerogative of the federal governments, would be lacking. As well, implementation and operation of such an agreement would have to rely on resources provided by member agencies, who may have other competing priorities.

The FVRD has taken the position that recognition under the Canada/US Air Quality Agreement, through the Annex process, is the best way to ensure that the technical and administrative issues identified in the past three years are considered and resolved. A window of opportunity for promoting this option will open in June, 2004 when the Canada/US International Air Quality Committee, established by the above Agreement, meets to review the 2000 Ozone Annex. This is also the target date and venue for presenting the agreed-upon GB/PS International Airshed Strategy in draft form. However, no decision has yet been made by the participating agency group on whether or not to recommend that the Strategy be enshrined in a new or existing Annex.

On March 2, 2004 and March 23, 2004, the FVRD Air Quality Committee and Board of Directors, respectively, adopted the following motion.

*[AQ 2004-27] **THAT** the Air Quality Committee confirm its preference that the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy result in a new or existing Annex to the Canada/US Air Quality Agreement; **THAT** staff promote this option at the 2004 03 04 meeting of the strategy co-ordinating committee; **AND FURTHER THAT** member municipalities and the Greater Vancouver Regional District be requested to support this initiative.*

Regarding the last part of this resolution, we request that your Council/Board support the Regional District in its efforts to have the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Airshed included formally in an annex to the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement. Should Council be so inclined, please advise Canada's Minister of Environment, the Hon. David Anderson and the US EPA Administrator, Mr. Mike Leavitt of your decision to support this resolution (see addresses below).

Yours truly



Terry Raymond, Chair  
FVRD Board of Directors

Addresses

In Canada:

Hon. David Anderson  
Minister of the Environment  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1A 0H3

In the US:

Mr. Michael O. Leavitt  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
United States of America

Issue/ Council Resolution Date	Council Decision
Marine Emissions <i>March 22, 2004</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• urge the federal government to accelerate its efforts and adopt the International Maritime Organization (IMO) sewage and air discharge standards for marine vessels</li> </ul>
US Energy Facilities (Sumas Energy 2/ BP Cherry Point) <i>October 16, 2002</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advise National Energy Board of Council's concerns regarding adverse impacts to air quality from proposed Sumas Energy 2 and advocated that the National Energy Board consider evidence of all environmental impacts in their decision-making pertaining to the request to construct a power transmission line in Canada</li> <li>• urge the Provincial Government to become an intervenor in the US project review process for BP Cherry Point</li> <li>• urge the GVRD to explore options for developing a more strategic approach to strengthening transboundary airshed management in the Lower Mainland, particularly with respect to addressing cumulative impacts of existing and new facilities</li> </ul>
Kyoto Protocol <i>September 9, 2002</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endorse Canada's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol</li> </ul>
Climate Change <i>November 26, 2001</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• endorse the Toronto Declaration Communiqué which affirmed commitment that local governments continue their collective efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and urges national governments to act on their commitment to reduce global climate change</li> </ul>
Sumas Energy 2 <i>August 27, 2001</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• urge the Federal Government to strengthen its role in transboundary air quality management as a result of experience in Sumas 2 power plant project review process which identified the need to better address cross-border air quality</li> </ul>
Climate Change <i>May 28, 2001</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the City of Richmond participate in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program</li> </ul>