

Burnaby City Council Presentation

Who are we?

We are Sustainabiliteens. How many of you have heard about the climate strike movement?

We are organizers with Sustainabiliteens, which is a group of teens from across Metro Vancouver organizing actions including climate strikes.

When we first heard that a girl named Greta Thunberg was striking from school to sit in front of Swedish parliament, demanding action on climate emergency, her action really resonated with us. This was the first action we had heard of that truly match this crisis in urgency and scale. We felt compelled to participate, and so when we heard that a student in Sudbury was planning a strike for December 7, we came together with a group of students from across Metro Vancouver and started organizing.

That day, we occupied the office of the BC minister for the Environment, George Heyman, and asked him questions about the CleanBC plan. The best part of the action was the sense of connection. Most of the students we talked to explained how overwhelmed, isolated and disempowered they usually felt worrying about climate crisis alone in their rooms. Now, they were part of a community of students feeling the same way and actually taking action.

What are we doing?

We continued to organize and act, holding a creative action on January 16 in support of a Vancouver City Hall motion to declare climate emergency, which was then passed unanimously.

March 15th was an international day of action, which over 1.6 million students across the world participated in. We organized the Vancouver action, which saw 2000 students flooding the streets of downtown, demanding climate justice.

Our movement is continuing to grow exponentially. Our latest climate strike included tens of thousands students across Canada, and shut down streets in downtown Vancouver as over 3000 students took to the streets on May 3rd. David Suzuki joined us and said:

*Youth are absolutely right to leave classes and demand action, because it's your entire future that is at stake. **Every parent and grandparent and teacher who cares about***

youth has a responsibility to support you in your call for our so-called leaders to make a genuine commitment to take action to rapidly reduce our use of fossil fuels.

As youth, there are few venues to make our voices heard about an issue that is going to affect our generation more than any other. By not only including, but being built of young people, the Climate Strike movement has been the first time many of us have been able to share our perspectives. And our perspective is particularly necessary for this moment and this movement, because as young people, we are still in touch with our imaginations. We are less entrenched in the confines of the status quo, and recognize that we can and must build a different world that puts people and justice before profits.

And we are not alone, here on unceded Coast Salish territory. We are part of a national movement of tens of thousands of students from across this land. We have come together to articulate our demands, which we are asking every level of government to include in their climate plan:

- **Bold Emissions Reductions Targets:** Legislate greenhouse gas emission reductions of 65% by 2030, reaching net zero emissions by 2040.
- **Separation of Oil and State:** Reject all new fossil fuel extraction or transportation projects, eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, and price pollution.
- **A Just Transition:** Transition to renewable energy and sustainable transportation infrastructure while guaranteeing opportunity for fossil fuel workers in the new economy.
- **Environmental Rights:** Enshrine in law the fundamental right to a healthy environment. This would include, but is not limited to, the right to safe air, clean water, and healthy soil.
- **Indigenous Rights:** Commit to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in full.
- **Conservation of Biodiversity:** Maintain and protect old growth forests, restore cut blocks, reduce habitat fragmentation and strengthen the protection of at risk species.
- **Protection for Vulnerable Groups:** Recognize Canada's disproportionate role in the climate crisis and subsequent responsibility for the protection of the most vulnerable. Include the addition of climate displacement as a basis for refugee status. Provide climate aid to lower and middle-income countries, as well as Arctic Canada, which disproportionately experience the impacts of the climate crisis.

Yesterday, we launched our call for an emergency climate justice plan. We are asking all 2019 candidates to, in their platform, adopt a climate plan that includes these seven demands. We will get tens of thousands of Canadians to pledge to only vote for a candidate that has done this, transforming our movement into a real force for political change. Parties' climate action plans are due to be handed in to us by our due date of July 1. We will then mark them, creating a report card that compares every parties plan to our demands. Finally, we will publicize this report card and make sure that every person who signed our pledge follows through.

How can Burnaby City Council help?

Please pass a motion that declares a Climate Emergency for Burnaby and join hundreds of cities around the world doing the same. This way the issue of the Climate Crisis will be front and centre for the citizens of Burnaby so we can start taking action!

We will continue to strike from school and flood the streets of the Lower Mainland until this real climate action becomes a priority. We are building towards the federal election, aiming to make climate action THE biggest election issue, and to mobilize as many voters as possible to vote with it as a priority. As young people, we are the moral authority on this crisis, and we can and must change the narrative so that climate is treated as the emergency that it is.

Dear Councillor Joe Keithley, will you table this motion to have Burnaby declare a climate emergency? I know your kids will thank you for it, all of us will.

More information:

climatestrikecanada.org