

Constructing pipeline doesn't make sense

Dear Editor:

FortisBC Energy has applied to build the Okanagan Capacity Upgrade Project running from Penticton to Chute Lake. This new gas pipeline would serve existing customers and anticipated new customers in the fast-growing Kelowna and Vernon areas.

First Things First Okanagan is a local non-profit society promoting climate action. We believe that constructing new fossil fuel pipelines in the Okanagan doesn't make sense.

About 30% of our community emissions are from natural gas used to heat homes and buildings. Since local governments are facing a challenge to reduce emissions to meet climate targets, building additional natural gas infrastructure moves us in the wrong direction.

FortisBC Energy's expansion of the gas market to new customers will make it hard for our region to lower the emissions which are causing global warming.

By requiring new homes to use options other than fossil fuels for home heating, municipalities can stop emissions from trending upward.

It is cost effective to install heat pumps or geothermal heating in new builds but much more difficult and costly to retrofit older homes.

Municipalities around North America are halting new fossil fuel hook-ups for home heating. We can do the same thing in British Columbia.

Heat pumps are the most efficient way to heat and cool homes. The new generation of heat pumps can be used to heat homes at temperatures down to -25 C and also provide cooling.

The recent B.C. Coroner's report outlines the need to cool homes to cope with higher summer temperatures.

FortisBC Energy agrees that emissions need to come down to meet climate targets and are promising to develop biomethane (renewable natural gas) and hydrogen to add to the natural gas stream.

But so far, the Fortis gas stream is only 1% biomethane, nowhere near the 40% reduction we must achieve by 2030.

Given the climate emergency that we are all coming to grips with, we believe energy companies need to reconsider their business model and support clean energy. Fortis, after all, provides electricity to most of the Southern Interior so could shift their corporate focus.

Imagine life without polluting emissions coming from fossil fuel use in our homes and our vehicles.

Let's take a pass on new gas lines in our communities.

Margaret Holm First Things First Okanagan Penticton https://www.pentictonherald.ca/opinion/article_b7e12ea2-ef53-11ec-b312-2370f0a17158.html