

Political Action Committee Report for 2022

Members of the Political Action Committee: Sue Kirschmann (chair), Margaret Holm, Khati Hendry, Jim Beattie, Lori Goldman, and Henry Sielmann



In 2022 a major focus for our committee was working to prevent new fossil fuel infrastructure. In February, First Things First Okanagan applied successfully to the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) to become an intervener on a local gas pipeline project - FortisBC's proposed Okanagan Capacity Upgrade (OCU) which would run above the Naramata bench. We prepared a submission but have not yet delivered it as the project was placed on hold in March and remained so until recently. Meanwhile, with the help of Dogwood BC, we launched a campaign to inform locals about the OCU and encourage them to submit comments on it to the BCUC. To date about 95 people have written comments opposing the OCU project.

In August FTFO also became an intervener on another BCUC proceeding - FortisBC's 20 year gas resources plan. We jointly submitted questions with another climate group (BC Climate Alliance) and since then have been sharing information and ideas with other climate groups throughout the province on how to counteract FortisBC's push to continue expanding usage of gas in buildings.

Throughout 2022 we kept an eye on local government issues and provided input where possible via surveys, at public meetings and through letters. Some of the issues we engaged in were:

- Development proposals including Wiltse, Spiller Road (Canadian Horizons), and the Naramata Vista project;
- RDOS - Regional Growth Strategy, OCU project, ESDPAs (Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit Areas), and "renewable natural gas" ("RNG");
- City of Penticton bylaw amendments and plans including streamside protection, EV charging rates, relaxation of building codes for passive homes, EV-ready parking requirements, bike parking requirements, Northern Gateway plans.

We also hosted an All-Candidates Forum on the Environment in the fall prior to the municipal elections, in which all but one of Penticton's mayoral and council candidates participated. Approximately 100 members of the public attended.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Kirschmann