

## Metro Vancouver raises concern over B.C.'s climate leadership plan

B.C.'s commitment to a new climate leadership plan is being questioned by Metro Vancouver staff, who say the provincial initiative doesn't adequately reflect the region's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals.

In a report going to Metro Vancouver's board on Friday, staff say they are concerned the province's decision not to issue a draft plan as promised for additional comment is watering down the concerns of local governments and the public. Instead, the province has said it will issue a final plan later this spring.

"In the absence of a detailed plan, it is difficult for staff to evaluate how well the (provincial plan) will support regional climate action priorities," the Metro report said, noting that it also would hurt the development of an integrated regional climate action strategy.

Premier Christy Clark announced in May 2015 plans to update the Climate Leadership Plan, a broad policy first introduced in 2008 by her predecessor, Gordon Campbell, as part of legislated targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Campbell brought in a provincial carbon tax, which was hailed for putting B.C. near the top of governments combating GHG emissions.

Clark appointed a "climate leadership team" made up of business, environmental, First Nations and academic leaders to help shape the proposed new plan, and set a two-stage goal of broad public consultation. But in recent months some have begun to question the government's commitment to advancing climate change initiatives.

In a November 2015 report, the climate leadership team said little progress has been made over the last four years and that it would now be difficult to achieve the original goal for 2020, which was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 33 per cent below 2007 levels.

Matt Horne, associate B.C. director for the Pembina Institute and a member of the climate leadership team, said he's concerned the province didn't produce a draft report.

"Overall, the whole process has been a little less than ideal," he said. "To me, it is a missed opportunity to have a more concrete conversation about the climate leadership plan." Horne said he shares some of the concerns of Metro Vancouver staff.

"I don't think we're on track for an exemplary outcome."

Instead of the draft plan the province has issued a "consultation guide" that summarizes the broad directions given to it by the team, as well as feedback from the public. But Metro staff say that guide does not provide detailed policies that would make up "an effective and meaningful plan."

"Both Metro Vancouver staff and municipal staff have identified the lack of a consultation process on the final plan as a concern," the authors of the Metro report said.

Staff were not available Monday for an interview.

Last year, Metro Vancouver outlined for the province four key areas important to regional climate change initiatives: widespread use of low/zero carbon vehicles; a move to net-zero carbon new buildings and near net zero carbon existing buildings; efforts to increase walking, cycling and transit while reducing vehicle trips, and carbon pricing that would encourage low carbon actions.