



FONVCA AGENDA

Wednesday January 25th 2012

Place: DNV Hall 355 W. Queens Rd V7N 2K6
Time: 7:00-9:00pm
Chair: Brian Platts – EUCCA tel: 604-985-5104
Email: bplatts@shaw.ca

Regrets: John Miller, Eric Andersen

1. Order/content of Agenda(*short)

Early agenda item submissions (especially those including electronic support material) - by members who plan to attend - would be appreciated.

2. Adoption of Minutes of Nov 17th

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/jan2012/minutes-nov2011.pdf>

Discussion of FONVCA regular meetings date/time/place

3. Old Business

3.1 Council Agenda Distribution - continued

<http://www.nsnews.com/technology/lines+communication+cloudy/6025408/story.html>

4. Correspondence Issues

4.1 Business arising from 7 regular emails:

Distributed with full package and posted on web-site
Clarification of posting letters emailed to FONVCA

4.2 Non-Posted letters – 0 this period

Distributed with full package but **not** currently posted on web-site.

Clarification of policy on posting letters emailed to FONVCA

4.3 Roundtable on “Current Affairs”

A period of roughly 30 minutes for association members to exchange information of common concerns.

- a) **Doug Curran: 7 Trends for planning Post-Oil Cities**
http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/big-city/31982/seven-trends-planning-post-oil-cities?ref=node_other_posts_by
http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2011/14nov-to/Doug_Curran_1dec2011.pdf

- b) **Corrie Kost: Improving Voter Turn-Out**
 Show young people, in a non-partisan way, just how much local governments influence their daily lives.

Encourage the formation of non-partisan young democracy clubs. Get them to nominate a monthly or quarterly speaker, hold debates on issues of their choice, etc.

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/jan2012/The%20democracy%20gap%20%97%20how%20did%20not%20voting%20become%20preferred%20option.pdf>

- c) **Eric Andersen:**
 -Cool Neighbourhood.
 -Traffic & Safety Meeting.

- d) **John Hunter**
 -“Living Wage” – see attached

5. New Business

Council and other District issues.

- a) **Council Advisory Committees** become Staff Advisory Committees: Plus/Minus aspects for public
- b) **Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan (POSSP) Draft 70p** released Dec 14/2011 (and its 87p Background Document) - requires feedback by January 27/2012.
<http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?a=5244>
- c) **BC Municipal Spending Watch 2011**
<http://www.cfib-fcei.ca/english/article/3422-bc-municipal-spending-watch-2011-it-s-getting-worse.html>
- d) **CNV & DNV could ban parking charges at LGH?**
<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/health/Doctors+urge+free+hospital+parking+patients/5780681/story.html>
<http://www.northshoreoutlook.com/news/134697273.html>
- e) **Waste to Energy**
<http://www.seas.columbia.edu/earth/wtert/globalwte.html>
- f) **Housing Backgrounder** - by Robyn Newton
<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/jan2012/HOUSING%20BACKGROUNDER%20final.pdf>

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Legal Issues

- a) **Earthquake Insurance – issue of deductible**
 \$1m coverage with 5% deductible means you pay first \$50,000
 Eg. For \$100,000 damage the deductible is really 50%
 The policy should clearly state the deductible as \$\$\$ not %!

- b) **Liability of Dog Owners:** ~460,000 Canadians are bitten each year- mostly children. They form a large fraction of home insurance claims!

<http://www.park.ca/content/newsletter/10.10/fido-liability.php>
<http://www.waterstonelaw.com/practice-areas/personal-injury/dog-bites/>
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1686260/pdf/canvet00356-0049.pdf>

6.2 Any Other Issues (2 min each)

- a) **News-Clips for current month**

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/jan2012/news-clips/>

- b) **Location based Community Consultation Platform**

<http://www.placespeak.com/>

- place to express your opinion on local issues/topics

- c) **Bicycles and Sustainability**

<http://thisbigcity.net/category/bicycle/>

- d) **Build your own Bear-Resistant Garbage Enclosures**

http://www.rdosmaps.bc.ca/min_bylaws/ES/solid_waste/Bears_resistant_enclosures.pdf

- e) **Climate Change 2011: Status report on US policy**

<http://bos.sagepub.com/content/68/1/39>

7. Chair & Date of next meeting.

Dan Ellis – Lynn Valley C.A. – Feb 16th /2012?

FONVCA

Minutes Nov 16th 2011

Place: DNV Hall 355 W. Queens Rd V7N 2K6
Time: 7:00-9:00pm

Attendees

John Miller	Lower Capilano Comm. R.A.
Peter Thompson	Edgemont & Upper Capilano C.A.
Eric G. Andersen (notes)	Blueridge C.A.
Paul Tubb (chair)	Pemberton Heights C.A.
John Hunter	Seymour C.A.

Regrets: Val Moller, Cathy Adams, Dan Ellis

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

1. ORDER / CONTENT OF AGENDA

Add 5 (d) Item – paper copy of FONVCA agenda

2. ADOPTION OF Oct 20th 2011 MINUTES

Moved (John Hunter), seconded (Eric) to adopt the October/2011 minutes as circulated.

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/oct2011/minutes-oct2011.pdf>

Carried unanimously.

3. OLD BUSINESS

3.1 Council Agenda Distribution

Corrie had found out that the costs for advertizing the Council Agenda would amount to about \$3-4,000 per year. He prepared a 'package' in this respect for David Stuart who gave a positive response. John Hunter is to follow up early in the new year.

4. Correspondence Issues

4.1 Business arising from 13 regular emails:

It was felt that e-mail exchange on Question 8 should not have been posted. John Hunter moved *that no interchanges should be posted on the FONVCA website without consent of all parties involved and to remove such communication on Question 8 for the Municipal Candidates.* This was seconded by John Miller and carried unanimously. For clarity...emails sent explicitly (eg to:, cc) to fonvca@fonvca.org will normally be posted on the web site. **Emails not sent to fonvca@fonvca.org will not be posted. Emails sent to fonvca@fonvca.org and stamped CONFIDENTIAL will not be posted**, but will be distributed by hardcopy at the following FONVCA meeting.

4.2 Non-Posted letters – 2 this period

A brief discussion was held about the non-posted items. The two non-posted items can be posted after the municipal election is over.

4.3 Roundtable on “Current Affairs”

A period of roughly 30 minutes for association members to exchange information of common concerns.
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Peter Thompson informed us about the NSCU redevelopment which will take place on Edgemont/Queen's. It will be all commercial with no residential aspect.

Peter Thompson stated that re-development related to the PetroCan station at Woodbine & Queens is still TBA.

Peter Thompson stated that nobody knows yet whether there will be bicycle lanes on Capilano Road.

Peter Thompson stated that the Delbrook/Griffin discussion has just started briefly before and during the election.

Eric and John Hunter reported about a successful All-Candidates meeting held at the Mount Seymour United Church

Paul reported on bear sightings in the Pemberton Heights area.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Council and other District issues.

- a) **Residential Location of Municipal Candidates**
<http://g.co/maps/aqzqe>
<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=206697059114531667273.0004b066baff07daa5f7f&msa=0>

The pros and cons of Councillors with local knowledge was discussed.

- b) **Election Prediction Contest**

It was felt by most that the traditional Election Prediction Contest should be removed from the agenda this time.

- c) **\$ Contribution by Candidates for meetings.**

The thought of letting the candidates pay for participating in all-candidates meetings was discussed. This would partly help to defray the costs associated with such meetings. It was pointed out that some locations are not charging for using their facility for all-candidates meetings. It was agreed to COD this item

- d) **Paper copies of FONVCA Agenda:**

It was decided to COD the item about perceived excessive paperwork in some of the FONVCA packages till Corrie's return.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Legal Issues

- (a) **Crooks vs. Newton**

Defamation case of links to “bad” sites dismissed.

<http://scc.lexum.org/en/2011/2011scc47/2011scc47.html>

Members also noted that more can be said at All-Candidates meetings than in another type of forum and candidates must accept this.

b) How an Organization can adopt Robert's Rules

<http://www.robertsrules.com/authority.html>

Roberts Rules Simplified:

[www.union1.org/oip/PDF Files/PDF- Others/Roberts Rules.pdf](http://www.union1.org/oip/PDF%20Files/PDF-%20Others/Roberts%20Rules.pdf)

This item was strictly for information purposes - no discussion held.

6.2 Any Other Issues (2 min each)

a) Congestion and Density

<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm96.htm>

b) Municipal Services – a nice overview

[http://www.trentu.ca/economics/WorkingPapers/Municipal %20Services.pdf](http://www.trentu.ca/economics/WorkingPapers/Municipal%20Services.pdf)

Above items a) and b) were strictly for information purposes - no discussion held.

Last minute item: what is the relevancy of the 'Outstanding Council Items'?

Why keep these on the FONVCA agenda? Also agreed to COD this item to the next meeting when Corrie will be back

7. CHAIR AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed unanimously by the members present to cancel the December 2011 FONVCA meeting since the term of the new Council would barely have started.

Thursday January 19th 2012

Chair: Brian Platts – E.U.C.C.A.

Notes: John Miller - Lower Capilano Comm. R.A.

Meeting adjourned ~ 9:00 PM.

DNV's lines of communication cloudy

FONVCA Agenda Item 3.1

BY DAVID KNEE, NORTH SHORE NEWS JANUARY 20, 2012

Open letter to District of North Vancouver mayor and Council:

I find it strange that all of council expressed concern about the low voter turnout in the recent municipal election, but the actions of this council over the past few years has been getting more negative towards the residents with respect to credible communication and input into district matters.

Council mostly alternates formal meetings in the chamber where public input is allowed and council workshops in the committee room where no public input is allowed.

The district no longer advertises what is on the agenda for the council meetings in the North Shore News though they still have a whole page on a regular basis for the District Dialogue. On that page in the Sunday, Jan. 8 issue they advertised that the mayor had a new Facebook page and that the council meeting dates for 2012 were on the district web site. There was enough empty space left on that page to say the week's council meeting was "cancelled," but you only found that out if you had a computer and went to the website. The district website now also informs that the Jan. 16 and 17 workshops are "cancelled."

When they do have a council meeting, there are many agenda addenda items added on the night of the meeting now.

The district has Facebook and Twitter pages, but they can still not respond to all the emails in a timely manner.

Perhaps when council recently changed many committees of council to be committees of staff it was not aware of all the legal ramifications. The one that could have the greatest impact on the public is that, while council committees are statutorily open to the public, committees of staff do not have this requirement. The abrogation of council's fiduciary requirements to uphold the interest of the public who elected them is thus considerably weakened.

I have heard that the district gave short notice to the community associations about future use of the meeting rooms at district hall on a regular basis for their meetings regarding the communication of district issues between the community associations.

I wonder why approximately 80 per cent of the residents do not bother to take an interest in their municipality and come out to vote.

Trust, credibility and respect take a long time to get but are lost in an instant and take a lot of time and effort to regain.

David Knee North Vancouver

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Subject: 7 Trends for Planning Post-Oil Cities | Sustainable Cities Collective

From: Douglas Curran <dougcurran@shaw.ca>

Date: 01/12/2011 11:26 PM

To: Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>, fonvca@fonvca.org

Hello Corrie,

Please include the link below in the next FONVCA Agenda.

During his inspiring talk at last night's CGA presentation, "We Make Buildings / Buildings Make Us; Looking beyond Green", UBC's Dr. Ray Cole outlined the necessary components of change of the urban environment if we are to begin to see any realistic reduction in the rate of carbon accumulation in the earth's atmosphere.

Coincidental with Dr. Cole's central points was the article "7 Trends for Planning Post-Oil Cities". While the points in the article are focussed on Cape Town, South Africa. the body of Allan Rhodes' research exactly matched those of Dr. Cole.

http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/big-city/31982/seven-trends-planning-post-oil-cities?ref=node_other_posts_by

best regards, Doug

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7 Trends for Planning Post-Oil Cities

Posted November 29, 2011 with **476 reads**

Keywords: [Climate Change](#), [COP17](#), [Durban](#), [fossil fuels](#), [oil](#), [south africa](#), [sprawl](#), [transportation](#)
[comments](#)

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*Breaking news from COP17 – reducing dependency on oil is critical for tackling climate change. In this post, [Robert Bowen](#) of [Future Cape Town](#) looks at the Masters Thesis of Allen Rhodes, entitled *Planning the Post-Oil City*, highlighting the seven trends identified and the opportunities they present for cities.*

Though we like to go about our ways as though nothing is going to change, the depletion of oil is inevitable. As supply decreases, so the extent of our dependency will become more evident. In order to survive, the City of Cape Town must take decisive action and begin preparing itself for what, unless properly planned, could be a massive disaster. Seven trends were outlined by Allen Rhodes in his excellent Masters Thesis, *Planning the Post Oil City* which neatly defines some of the obstacles and opportunities for Cape Town to prepare itself for a post oil world.

- 1.** Rhodes identifies our unsustainable energy procurement and heavy reliance on fossil fuels as his first trend, drawing attention to our heavy reliance on coal and oil. These must be addressed if sustainability is to be seriously considered. It is fortunate, at least in a practical sense, that South Africa's large supplies of coal will be available to smooth the transition to a post oil city. However, this should not be considered a sustainable alternative for oil.
- 2.** The second trend identified is our city's heavy reliance on oil dependent transport, without which our economy and society could not function. This must be addressed if we do not wish to see a collapse. Transport needs must be reduced or eliminated and alternative sustainable means created, such as trains or trams powered on clean energy.
- 3.** This trend addresses the mono-functionality and sprawl of Cape Town. These are the direct results of the cheap fuel which facilitated easy movement in the past. This extensive sprawl is land intensive; the development is consumptive and the result – unsustainable. Particularly for the urban poor who find themselves isolated without economic opportunity and a costly transport fare away from employment.
- 4.** The Fourth trend identifies our heavy dependence on a globalised system of trade, leaving us vulnerable to shifts in economic conditions. Consider the impact unaffordable flights would have on our tourist industry in an oil scarce environment. Unable to transport goods long distance, our local production systems will need to be improved. In light of this Rhodes proposes that local-government should promote means of self-sufficiency, reducing our reliance on external global resources.

5. The Fifth trend Rhodes identifies is the lack of localised food producers and the industry's current reliance on oil for mechanised labour, transport and processing. Unless these systems are improved we may find ourselves without food on the table. The production of labour intensive, organically grown foods on the periphery as well as in small open spaces within the city may offer the solution to this problem, whilst strengthening the local economy.

6. The Sixth trend deals with the consumptive lifestyles so many aspire to, and the disconnection from natural resources it results in. This wasteful mindset, which also includes the *One house, One Plot suburban dream*, is ultimately unsustainable. Promoting sustainable living at a domestic scale could result in a greater degree of conservancy as well as a higher quality of life.

7. Finally, the Seventh trend is the Mono-functional infra-structural development which is both wasteful and expensive. Rhodes' response to this is a call for us to seek holistic and creative solutions which aim to promote sustainability and conservation of energy and resources. He proposes this could potentially be achieved through the implementation of multi-functional and integrated infrastructure systems. Should we actively start to address these trends we may avert a crisis. If we approach them as design opportunities we stand to benefit further.

Picture a cleaner, quieter self sufficient city where opportunity is not dependent on your location, and everything is walkable. Where an approach to the post oil city has resulted in a local booming economy specialising in sustainable practices. Imagine this and it's not difficult to see the value of the opportunities the post oil challenge poses.

17 Sustainable Ideas for COP17 is a collaboration between [This Big City](#) and [Future Cape Town](#) running alongside the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) from November 28th to December 9th.

Opinion: The democracy gap — how did not voting become preferred option?

FONVCA Agenda Item 4.3(b)

BY CRAIG MCINNES, VANCOUVER SUN DECEMBER 7, 2011 6:05 AM

escapes.ca

If democracy is such a hard-won right, why don't people vote? The biggest reason given in recent studies that have looked at the decline in voter turnout in Canada is a lack of interest, but why don't people care about a chance to have a say in how their community, province or country is run?

<http://www.samaracanada.com/what-we-do/democracy/the-real-outsiders>

A new study released today has a new take on the ebbing interest in politics that the authors hope offers clues about how to turn the tide. The report by Samara, an Ottawa-based institute that looks at citizen engagement and democracy, found that it's not a lack of interest, but a sense of futility that goes beyond what happens in the voting booth. They say that some don't vote because they have been turned off by previous experience, either with the government or politicians. They believe the system doesn't work for them.

In many Canadian elections, the number of people who don't vote exceeds the number who back the winning candidate.

In the recent municipal elections, the average turnout was just under 30 per cent — seven in 10 eligible voters in B.C. didn't bother to mark a ballot.

In the last provincial election, a record low of 55 per cent of registered voters turned out. Federally, the percentage has been hanging around 60 per cent, with a slight increase in the May election in which Prime Minister Stephen Harper finally got his majority.

A survey following that campaign found that about 28 per cent of those who didn't vote said they weren't interested. That response included people who felt their vote would not have made a difference in the outcome.

The next biggest category, about 23 per cent, said they were just too busy. Other reasons included illness or disability, not liking any of the candidates, couldn't get to the polls and just plain forgot.

The Samara report suggests there is more going on. They set up eight small focus groups, seven with people who didn't vote and an eighth with people who did as a control. The seven groups who didn't vote were organized around groups that traditionally have had a low turnout: lower-income Canadians, less-educated young people, women in Quebec, urban aboriginals, recent immigrants and rural Canadians.

What they found was that people who were engaged felt they were part of the democratic process and people who didn't see themselves as outsiders, often because at some point they had an experience in which their expectations weren't met.

They may have sought assistance from elected politicians or civil servants and received little help. Or, especially with younger Canadians, they just assumed the political system didn't represent their concerns.

Although the groups were small and did not represent the overall population, in a somewhat parallel finding, outgoing members of Parliament interviewed by Samara co-founders Alison Loat and Michael MacMillan following the 2009 federal election often reported that they also felt like outsiders at times, despite their success in the system.

They said that prime ministers, whatever the party, acted more like dictators than democratic leaders.

One way to look at these findings is to say that all parts of the system, from political parties to politicians to governments, need to become more service-oriented. No doubt that would help. We need to feel as if the public service works for us, that our MPs and MLAs are representing our views, not just answering to their party leaders.

But I wonder whether this isn't also a question of unreasonable expectations.

Successful democracy can't be defined as a system that allows everyone to achieve exactly what they want. That is too high a bar.

What we can strive for is a system that gives anyone who wants to participate a chance to feel as if their voices matter even if their views don't prevail.

I'm not sure what that would look like. But when even MPs feel they don't have a voice in the way Canada is governed, it's still a long way off.

cmcinnes@vancouversun.com

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North Vancouver City will define its 'living wage' Policy, if adopted, could define what city contractors pay their workers

**FONVCA Agenda Item
4.3(d)**

BY BENJAMIN ALLDRITT, NORTH SHORE NEWS JANUARY 18, 2012

The City of North Vancouver will continue to explore the possibility of becoming a "living wage employer," despite both of the North Shore's other municipalities expressing no interest in the idea.

A living wage employer ensures that all of its employees, and those of any contractors it hires, are paid a certain hourly wage. Metro Vancouver has pegged that figure at \$18.81 per hour. Currently, only the City of New Westminister has taken such a step, and now requires its contractors to sign a declaration guaranteeing their workers are paid at least that much.

In September of last year, a motion sponsored by Coun. Craig Keating invited the districts of North and West Vancouver, as well as the business and non-profit sectors, to investigate what a living wage figure might be for the North Shore.

In a report presented Monday night, city human resources director Susan Ney said both neighbouring districts had declined to participate. Ney recommended the matter be dropped, particularly as her staff were already "fully committed to other council-approved projects."

Nevertheless, Keating said the city should continue to look into a living wage policy.

"I want to keep this option open," said Keating. "Identifying where we have gaps in paying employees, both through contractors and directly.

"I certainly think, at this stage, a dismissal of the whole project without inquiring into where we are as a municipality falls short of the original intent of the motion."

Keating said he certainly hoped the city would eventually take on such a policy, and said it was "a shameful moment" when the districts refused to participate.

"I'm happy to support moving forward on this," said Coun. Rod Clark. "The City of North Vancouver prides itself on leadership on a number of fronts - carbon footprints, sustainability, a number of things. As far as I'm concerned, a living wage policy is something I will support until it's proven not to be tenable. In fact, I would have perhaps leapt ahead and said do as New Westminister has done and go with the \$18.81."

Coun. Guy Heywood said he had thought the original motion was to "find a number" rather than commit to a wage floor. He also asked staff how this would affect unionized employees.

Ney replied that any changes to a collective bargaining agreement would have to be negotiated, and that a living wage policy would mostly affect contractors and their employees. Working students, however, would likely be exempt.

"In my mind," said Heywood, "this is attempting to extend the benefits of being employed in the public sector to all the contractors with the public sector, and it might be overreaching the city's mandate for social engineering. I'm not in favour of this."

Coun. Don Bell was also "not comfortable" with the living wage proposal.

"My concern is: I'd like to know the impact in terms of city employees. I'd like to know what the costs are to us. My concern is also the suppliers of services to the city. I think that we need to hear from the Chamber of commerce and the Lower Lonsdale Business Association."

Bell asked how a living wage policy would affect such activities as renting a conference room in a local hotel.

"I think it's a bit heavy-handed," he said. Mayor Darrell Mussatto said he wanted to work towards a living wage policy.

"More information will help us make a better decision," he said. "If you take the North Shore as its own entity, the cost of living is probably a bit higher than if you take the whole Lower Mainland as a region.

"People who work in our community should be able to live in our community," he said. "I've said that before and I'll say it again."

Council voted 5-2 to move ahead with researching a living wage policy, with Heywood and Bell dissenting.

balldritt@nsnews.com

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BC Municipal Spending Watch

4th Annual Report

Shachi Kurl, Director of Provincial Affairs, British Columbia & Yukon
Madeleine Delli-Benedetti, Research Analyst Intern
Queenie Wong, Senior Research Analyst

Despite a new ranking system and changes aimed at better measuring the rates and levels at which local government spends your money, CFIB's fourth edition of BC Municipal Spending Watch reveals a familiar but worsening story. Municipal operating spending adjusted for inflation has now ballooned to nearly four times the rate of population growth over the last decade. Had operating spending growth been held to population and inflation growth between 2000 and 2009, BC taxpayers would have saved over \$4 billion.

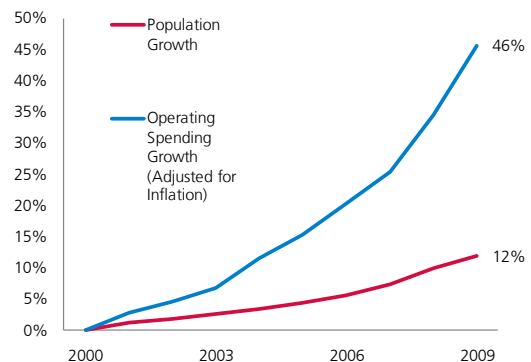
Introduction

Between 2000 and 2009, BC's population grew 12 per cent, while municipal operating spending, adjusted for inflation, grew by 46 per cent; nearly four times faster than population over this time period and more than twice as fast as real disposable income per capita (see Figure 1.1).

Spending has increased the most in recent years. According to the most recent data available, municipal operating spending in BC increased the most during the 2008-2009 period since 2000. In 2009, total BC municipal operating spending totalled \$4.4 billion (in 2000 dollars), up \$339 million (in 2000 dollars) from the previous year.

Figure 1.1

BC Municipal Operating Spending Growth (Adjusted for Inflation) and Population Growth, 2000-2009



Previous editions of this report emphasized growth in spending. This year's report responds to feedback from municipal politicians who felt it was unfair to focus on this measure alone. At their request, CFIB has revised the methodology in this report,

ranking municipalities by giving equal weight to real operating spending per capita growth from 2000-2009, and 2009 operating spending per capita (i.e., the rate at which local government has spent over a decade, and the dollar amount every citizen paid for local government spending increases in the last year.

By measuring both municipal spending rates and actual spending levels, results show that local governments' spending is no better amongst small communities than major metropolitan centres. If inflation adjusted operating spending over the last decade had been held in line with population, BC families might have enjoyed an extra \$4,172 in their wallets.

Adding more pressure to citizens: in many communities where population shrunk, municipal operating spending continued to rise.

Business owners and residents have reason to be concerned, because most municipal government revenue originates from taxes. In 2009, municipal revenue totalled \$7.2 billion, nearly half of that cash (47 per cent), came from taxpayers who worked hard to earn it.

Among the largest municipalities, Penticton is ranked as the worst in 2009 in terms of maintaining sustainable operating spending growth and levels. In spite of recent, concerted efforts to pay more attention to the bottom line, real operating spending per capita growth was 59 per cent for 2000-2009 (see Table 1.1).¹

Penticton also displayed the highest operating spending per capita in 2009 among these municipalities. On a per capita basis, operating spending stood at \$2,326. Overall, Among *all* BC municipalities Penticton is ranked the 19th worst as achieving low operating spending growth and levels. It is expected subsequent reports will reflect improvements on both these measures.

In 2009, the biggest municipalities spent on average \$1,290 per person in operating costs. This represents a 37 per cent increase in real operating spending per capita from 2000 to 2009, above the BC average of 30 per cent.

Who are BC's biggest spenders? Lytton is ranked the worst BC municipality overall in terms of sustainable operating spending level and growth (see Table 1.2).

And while they may be popular places to play, fun appears to come at a price in destination communities like Whistler, Tofino and Ucluelet. Each exhibited much higher than average operating spending growth and levels from 2000 to 2009.

Every municipality in BC can do better, but some will need to make more effort than others to ensure operating spending growth and levels are monitored and controlled appropriately. Taxpayers can't afford to pay for spending that continues to outpace reasonable benchmarks like population and inflation growth.

Outline

Section One: Introduction

Section Two: Methodology

This section will outline CFIB's approach to analyzing municipal spending.

Section Three: Municipal Revenue Trends

This section provides a breakdown and overview of major revenue sources.

Section Four: Municipal Spending Trends

This section will look at municipal spending by geographic region. Operating spending levels and operating spending growth will be analyzed.

Section Five: Basis for Spending Comparison

This section will address the feedback received from municipal associations concerning previous reports.

Section Six: Conclusions

Section Seven: Recommendations

¹ Leahy, Doug. City of Penticton. 2011. *City of Penticton 2009 to 2012 Financial Plans*.

Table 1.1

How BC's Largest Municipalities Spend (population 25,000 and above)

Listed from Worst to Least Worst*

Municipality	2000-2009 Population Growth (%)	2000-2009 Real Operating Spending Growth (%)	2000-2009 Real Operating Spending per Capita Growth (%)	2009 Operating Spending per Capita (\$)	2000-2009** Savings for Family of 4 (\$)
Penticton	5	66	59	2,326	11,339
West Vancouver	2	45	42	1,850	8,596
Langford	38	160	88	842	9,311
Kelowna	22	76	45	1,552	7,019
Victoria	8	40	30	1,789	6,141
Langley -District	15	85	61	1,144	4,364
North Vancouver -City	7	54	44	1,466	7,761
North Vancouver -District	1	49	48	1,380	7,881
Prince George	-3	27	31	1,516	5,739
Abbotsford	13	70	50	1,089	3,226
Vernon	14	70	49	1,097	4,997
Vancouver	11	39	25	1,586	4,787
Chilliwack	18	81	53	939	4,725
Delta	-1	25	26	1,448	3,910
New Westminster	13	27	12	1,697	1,665
Richmond	13	47	30	1,302	4,298
Maple Ridge	16	68	44	1,014	5,322
Kamloops	8	34	25	1,342	3,627
Coquitlam	5	40	33	1,146	3,981
Port Moody	34	67	25	1,255	3,656
North Cowichan	9	51	38	983	3,022
Langley - City	3	33	29	1,095	3,621
Saanich	5	37	30	1,057	3,309
Burnaby	12	38	24	1,171	2,584
Surrey	25	73	39	856	3,079
Port Coquitlam	7	38	29	1,036	5,120
Nanaimo	13	35	20	1,215	1,664
Campbell River	7	25	17	1,165	3,507
Mission	15	33	15	1,054	1,148

*The rankings are based on an equal weighting of 2000-2009 operating spending growth and 2009 operating spending levels. This is different from previous reports that mainly considered operating spending growth. Overall rankings are available in Appendix III and IV.

**To calculate the total savings over the time period 2000-2009, it is assumed that the municipality held operating spending to population and inflation growth.

FONVCA Agenda Item 6.1(b)

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ProtecTips

IS FIDO A LIABILITY?

Having a dog in your home provides companionship, protection and friendship—a person's best friend. And while most dogs are friendly, loving members of the family, even normally docile dogs may bite when they are frightened or protecting their puppies, owners or food. "But never MY dog"...you say. The statistics may surprise you.

In the United States dog bites accounted for more than one-third of all homeowner's insurance liability claims paid out in 2009.* Health Canada estimates that 400,000 people are bitten by dogs in Canada each year (that is 45 dog bites per hour!), with British Columbia and Ontario reporting the largest number of dog bite cases. Animal bite liability varies across Canada but in British Columbia common law principles apply. In most cases, you are responsible for any injury claims if your beloved pet does bite someone—whether it is on your property or not.

Are you liable if your dog does not bite, but causes an injury by knocking someone over? Yes. All kinds of accidents and injuries can be caused by a dog on the run—even if they are just being playful. Friendly, non-aggressive dogs can cause a lot of damage while running at full speed. Even small dogs, leashed or not, can cause a tripping hazard on crowded streets or sidewalks. **Dog owners are liable for any injuries their pets cause, even if it does not involve a bite.**

The good news is that most standard homeowner, condo and tenant policies provide anywhere from \$1 million to \$2 million of dog bite liability coverage. However, many renters and condo owners are still left unprotected because they mistakenly rely on the insurance held by landlords or condo corporations. A personal tenant or condo policy is required to secure this necessary personal liability protection.

While it is clearly important to make sure you have liability protection, it is even more important to take the necessary steps to make sure that you and those around you are protected physically! So how can you keep Fido, Bowser, or Spot from biting or causing an injury in the first place? Here are a few tips:

- ✦ Consult with a professional (e.g. veterinarian, animal behaviourist, or responsible breeder) to learn about suitable breeds of dogs for your circumstances.
- ✦ Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it. Use caution when bringing a dog into a home with an infant or toddler
- ✦ Have your dog spayed or neutered. Studies show that dogs are three times more likely to bite if they are NOT neutered.
- ✦ Socialize your dog so it knows how to act with other people and animals.
- ✦ Always keep your dog on a leash while outside the confines of your property or designated off-leash areas. Be especially aware of your pet when on crowded streets or sidewalks.
- ✦ If your pet is hyper or excitable, pick less busy times to take him/her to areas, such as a dog park, where they will encounter other dogs or humans.
- ✦ Be especially aware of your dog's behaviour when around more vulnerable people such as young children or seniors.
- ✦ Don't allow children to disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping.
- ✦ Play non-aggressive games with your dog, such as "go fetch". Playing aggressive games like "tug-of-war" can encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- ✦ Never approach a strange dog and always avoid eye contact with a dog that appears threatening.

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*Insurance Information Institute, New York, August 18, 2010.

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Dog Bites

It is estimated that 460,000 Canadians are bitten by dogs each year and studies suggest that 50 to 70 percent of dog bite victims are children. Dog bites can result in permanent scarring, nerve damage, disease and a significant risk of infection. Often there is psychological harm that lasts well beyond the physical injury.

Given the traumatic experience of a dog bite, it is not unusual for dog bite victims to seek compensation for their injuries. Dog owners will often have homeowner's insurance that provides coverage for dog bites. The Insurance Information Institute reports that approximately one quarter of all homeowner's liability insurance claims are related to dog bites.

Before going to court, you should be familiar with the laws governing dog bites. In British Columbia, dog owners are generally protected from liability for dog bites unless it is shown that the dog owners knew that the dog had aggressive tendencies. Because of the requirement for a dog owner to have knowledge of a dog's aggressive tendencies before being found liable, the law of dog bites has been summed up in the phrase "every dog gets one free bite" however, this phrase is not entirely accurate. Courts in British Columbia have found aggressive tendencies without a previous bite in cases where a dog would growl, chase letter carriers, bark or snarl.

Your local community may also have laws concerning the responsibilities of those who care for dogs. Additionally, if a dog attacks and injures someone, it is possible that the dog owner could be charged with criminal negligence.

Our team of lawyers has experience handling a wide variety of dog bite claims. We can assist you with all aspects of your claim, including coordinating medical assessments, negotiating with insurers and pursuing litigation. Contact us today for a free consultation.

Build Your Own Bear-Resistant Garbage Enclosure

The following information was provided courtesy of the City of Juneau. For more information on living with bears, please visit their web site at: <http://www.juneau.org/bears/garb.php>. There are a number of very informative links on this web site in addition to general information about living with bears.

For another bear-resistant garbage enclosure, please visit the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission web site at http://myfwc.com/bear/brochures/Garbage_Caddy_Plans.pdf.



You can also build your own dumpster "cage" or trash can holder as shown in these two photos. Please consult with your local wildlife agency for guidance to help ensure that your enclosure is effective at deterring bears.

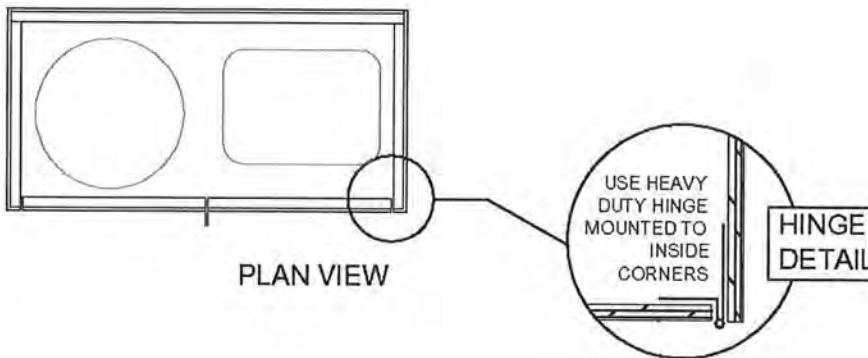
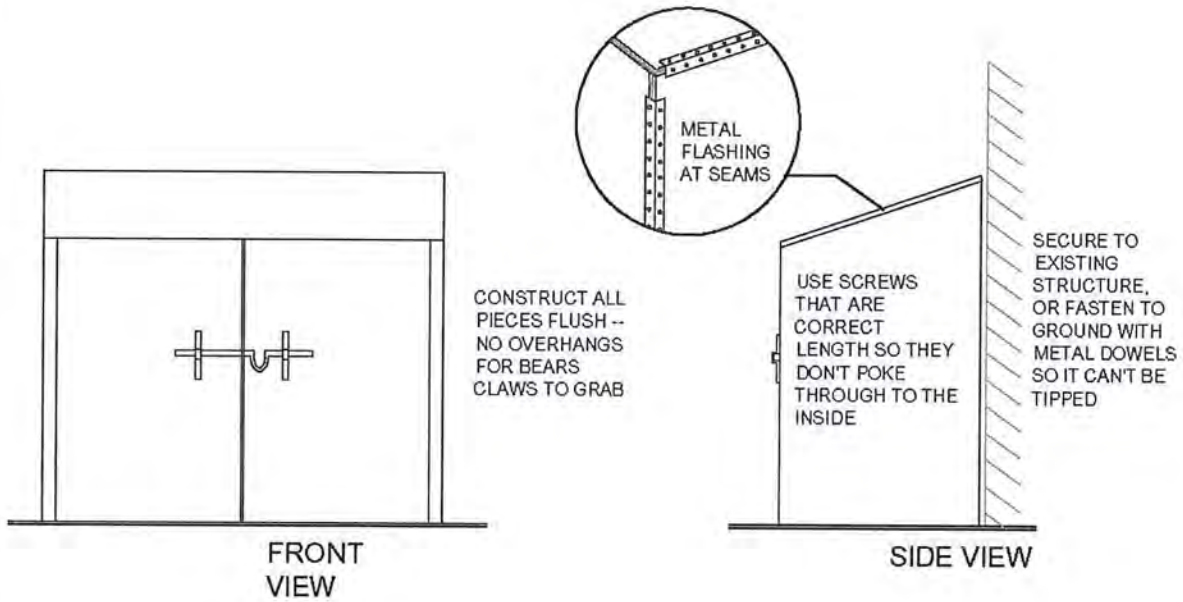
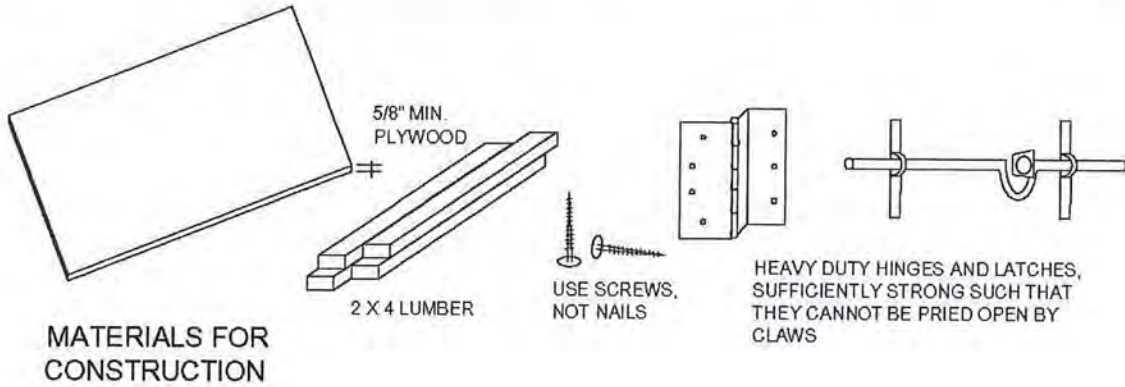
Photos by Jamie Jonkel, MFWP



Tips for building your own bear-resistant garbage enclosure:

If you do not have the luxury of purchasing a bear-resistant trash container, or cannot keep your garbage cans in a secure, locked shed, garage or other fully-enclosed structure, you might consider building an enclosure for the garbage cans. Directions are provided below.

- Use plywood that is at least 5/9" thick.
- Use 2 x 4 construction.
- Use screws instead of nails.
- Hinges and latches should be heavy duty and strong enough that they can't be pried open by bears' claws.
- Enclosures must not have seams that bears can get their claws into. Cover seams with metal flashing.
- Secure the enclosure so that it can't be tipped over.
- If you can get into the enclosure without using your hands—by jumping on it, kicking it, or using your shoulders, then it isn't bear resistant!





Make sure that the doors fit together snugly with no gaps that bears can get claws into.



Attractive enclosure with pitched roof to shed snow. **Strengths:** Minimal seams. **Weaknesses:** Hinges and latches not heavy duty.



Chain link enclosure - this one would be more secure without the gaps above the front door and near the top. **Strengths:** Has roof cover to shed rain and snow. Anchored to ground. **Weaknesses:** Lots of places for claws to grab and pull. Cans visible to bears.



Chain link enclosure - this one would be more secure without the gaps between the panels and the posts. **Strengths:** Built on concrete slab, anchored to ground. **Weaknesses:** Needs roof to shed snow/water. Lots of places for bear to grab and pull. Cans visible to bears.



Wood enclosure. **Strengths:** Secured to ground, sturdy latch, metal flashing on roof seam. **Weaknesses:** Matching siding too flimsy.



Concrete enclosure. Cement sides and base, steel top, and seamless construction.



Wooden enclosure. **Strengths:** Heavy duty hinges and latches, seamless construction and holds six plus cans.



Wooden enclosure. **Strengths:** Secured to ground and stairs. **Weaknesses:** Seams too big, claws can grip, sides can be pulled off. Roof has visible seam and may be torn off.



Metal enclosure. **Strengths:** All steel, seamless construction. **Weaknesses:** Difficult to pull full cans up and out of enclosure. Spring loaded door may open when bumped.



Wooden enclosure. **Strengths:** Seamless construction, metal flashing on seams, and minimal overhang of roof.



Wooden enclosure. **Strengths:** Secure to ground, seamless construction, directly accessible to refuse collection, and clip fastening latch.



Side view of the enclosure pictured on the left with metal flashing on seams and seamless construction.

The photos below show some of the various designs being used in the Village of Snow Mass in Colorado. The Village now has an ordinance requiring residents to store garbage and other bear attractants in a bear-resistant enclosure or other secure manner.

These designs illustrate that not only can enclosures be made to be bear-resistant; they can also be very attractive and functional.

Photos provided courtesy of Laurie Smith, Snowmass Village Animal Services.



Continued on next page...





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Climate change 2011: A status report on US policy

Steven Cohen and Alison Miller

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Climate change 2011: A status report on US policy

Steven Cohen and Alison Miller

Abstract

A growing partisan divide in Congress stalled almost all new federal climate policy in 2011. The divide frustrated efforts to pass a cap-and-trade carbon permitting system, spawned a battle between the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Congress, pushed most substantive climate change policy down to the municipal level and hindered US ability to effectively negotiate an international climate agreement. Amid the federal partisan wrangling, US cities have enacted far-sighted climate policy initiatives, and the growing cost of fossil fuels has stimulated investment in renewable energy, edging the country closer to commercially viable alternatives to fossil fuels. These trends could help provide an alternate route to climate mitigation, even without international treaties or national legislation. But the inevitable shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources would be greatly hastened by federal action to tax carbon dioxide emissions and use the revenue generated to support alternative energy technologies. That action is extremely unlikely to occur unless climate change comes to be seen in the United States as a practical, rather than ideological, issue.

Keywords

cap and trade, carbon dioxide regulation, cities and climate change, climate change in 2011, climate change partisanship, greenhouse gases, US climate policy

Throughout 2011, the growing partisan divide in Congress stalled new federal climate policy, and it is likely that this will continue to affect US efforts on climate change for the coming year, at least. The overarching reality of this divide has frustrated all efforts to pass a cap-and-trade carbon emissions permitting system; spawned a running battle between the US Environmental Protection Agency, which is in the process of implementing regulations on the emission of greenhouse gases, and Congress, where Republicans and some oil-, gas-, and

coal-state Democrats have tried to block these efforts; pushed most substantive climate change policy action down to the municipal level; and hindered US ability to effectively negotiate an international climate agreement, essentially turning UN conferences into educational tools rather than policy-making venues.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the partisan divide, during the past year US cities have led the way in terms of taking significant action aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change. And even as partisan disagreement has

kept federal climate change policy at a standstill, alternatives to fossil fuels—particularly solar energy—have become increasingly cost-effective in the United States and around the globe. On a worldwide basis, the transition from fossil to alternative fuels is inevitable. In the United States, the question is whether partisan disagreement on climate change will keep the federal government from providing the support for research that will allow the United States to be a leader in that transition.

A growing partisan divide on climate

It is impossible to deny or ignore the growing partisan divide that has profoundly influenced the US climate debate, making it more polarized even as climate science has become more definitive. Last year, a Gallup poll found that in 2010, only 30 percent of self-identified Republicans believed the effects of global warming were already beginning, a drop from almost 50 percent in 2007. The percentage of convinced Democrats, however, remained at 70 percent or higher during the same period, according to Gallup. A Pew Research Center poll in October 2010 found similar results highlighting the partisan divide, reporting a 40 percentage point difference between Republicans and Democrats believing evidence that the Earth is warming (Marshall, 2010).

The division remains even after factoring in education. A 2011 study found that, among Democrats and liberals, levels of education had a strong correlation with not only a belief in climate

science, but with individual concern about global warming; however, that same study found the opposite effect in the case of Republicans and conservatives (Hoffman, 2011). This persistent gap suggests that climate change has become an ideological issue—much like gun control, taxes, or regulation—that defines what it means to be a Republican or Democrat (Nisbet, 2009). The US divide over climate change involves more than just an understanding of climate science.

Republican aversion to climate policy is best evidenced by the party's 2012 presidential candidates. Many of the Republican candidates are climate change deniers, and though some have acknowledged the validity of the issue in the past, they have retreated from these positions for fear of alienating conservative primary voters. Jon Huntsman, a moderate Republican, is the only GOP candidate to have supported emissions regulations; he even pushed for carbon dioxide cap-and-trade legislation while he was governor of Utah. Huntsman has since backed away from that support, however, claiming now that "this isn't the moment" for a cap-and-trade market. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who is often criticized for flip-flopping, also backed away from previous statements supporting coal regulation and clean-technology investment. He now supports additional use of oil and coal as well as reduced environmental regulation, placing these as key factors in his economic proposal (Romney, 2011). The rest of the candidates consistently question the validity of climate science and cite economic concerns as the reason they are against regulation of carbon emissions.

Issues behind the great divide

The fossil fuel industry has caused much of the political division on climate change through aggressive action to promote skepticism among the public; the industry, typically through conservative think tanks, has funded opposing scientific opinions, economic reports, and public relations campaigns. For example, in 2005 Chris Mooney of *Mother Jones* found 40 ExxonMobil-funded organizations that either sought to undermine mainstream scientific findings on climate change or maintained affiliations with a small group of skeptic scientists (Mooney, 2005). Furthermore, some climate scientists may have contributed to the political divide by moving past their knowledge of climate change to predict socioeconomic impacts and propose policy solutions that go beyond the scope of climate data and models. This combination of science, policy, and advocacy can undermine non-expert confidence in climate science.

But it seems climate skeptics are concerned about the validity of climate change mostly because of its implications for regulation of business. The effort to regulate greenhouse gases would eventually entail some level of government regulation of many aspects of daily life, from the cars Americans drive to the electricity that powers their homes and businesses. Those who are wary of big government dislike this potential intrusion.

Critics of climate regulation argue that it will pose an impossible burden on businesses and stifle a weak economy through higher energy prices. At least in the Republican Party, political dialogue throughout 2011 was dominated by the message that government wastes

money and takes on duties that should be left to the private sector. Emboldened by electoral gains in 2010, conservatives and Tea Partiers continue to emphasize that government is the problem and an unregulated free market is the solution.

Republican fears that climate change regulation would have an enormous negative effect on the US economy appear to be based on faulty assumptions. Past environmental regulation in the United States has been shown to provide a net economic advantage, with benefits vastly outweighing costs. According to the Office of Management and Budget's draft annual *Report to Congress on Benefits and Costs of Federal Regulations*, from October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2010, the estimated annual benefits from environmental regulation were between \$132 and \$655 billion. The costs during that same period were estimated at \$44 to \$62 billion (US Office of Management and Budget, 2011). EPA regulation of carbon dioxide emissions and the mere possibility of climate legislation have already spurred innovation and investment in a wide variety of clean technologies. Firms across all industries are also developing ways to use fewer resources, pollute less, and increase efficiency.

Because of their ideological approach to the climate change issue, however, Republicans tend to emphasize the cost of regulations associated with the shift to renewable energy and downplay or simply ignore possible positive impacts of the shift to alternatives.

The road ahead for federal climate policy

The Obama administration and congressional Democrats are unlikely to press a

climate confrontation with Republicans in 2012, given the current unemployment situation. The Democrats do not want to be seen as the party forcing additional regulation on business during a slack economy. Moreover, congressional Democrats are very unlikely to risk a vote for climate legislation, potentially angering conservatives and industry leaders in their districts, because such a bill has no chance of passing without Republican support, which will not materialize during this presidential election year.

In 2011, Republicans succeeded in the climate change debate primarily by questioning climate science and opposing the idea of regulation as a solution. How climate change, specifically, and regulation, more broadly, are framed during the 2012 campaign will influence subsequent climate policy as much as who wins and who loses the election. If the primary campaign and general election continue to address climate change as a partisan issue that deals with the evils of regulation and the fallibility of science, it is highly unlikely that legislation on carbon dioxide emissions will pass Congress in the ensuing several years. And other political realities suggest the US government is unlikely to move soon to control greenhouse gas emissions in any comprehensive way.

By its very nature, the climate problem is a tough political issue to bring to the policy agenda. The causes of the climate problem are everywhere; they can't be located, like a point source of pollution or a toxic waste dump can. The impacts of climate change are largely in the future, and they cannot be seen or smelled. The US political system, based as it is on places as well as people, will pay more attention to impacts on a specific location

than those that are general—or, in the case of climate change, global.

Although not often discussed in domestic politics, the winner-take-all nature of congressional elections also tends to work against action on issues where consensus has not been reached. In legislative systems with proportional representation, a “green” party might get 10 percent of the votes nationally, 10 percent of elected representatives, and some ability to work in a coalition to move its favored issues. In the United States, a party that gets 20 percent of the votes in every congressional district sends no one to Washington.

For all of these reasons, even though some elected leaders would like to regulate greenhouse gases through comprehensive federal legislation, none was introduced in 2011, and none is likely to be passed in the near future. Despite the absence of new legislation, the courts have decided that the existing Clean Air Act requires the EPA to regulate greenhouse gases.

EPA regulation of greenhouse gases

In October 1999, a coalition of 19 non-profit organizations petitioned the EPA to regulate greenhouse gases emitted by new motor vehicles under the Clean Air Act. The environmental groups claimed that these gases contribute to climate change, endangering public health and welfare, and, therefore, ought to be regulated as air pollutants.

During the George W. Bush administration, the EPA rejected the view that the Clean Air Act required the EPA to address climate change, and a group of 13 environmental organizations and 15 states, territories, and municipalities

filed legal challenges (Environmental Defense Fund, 2011). In 2007, in its landmark decision *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the US Supreme Court found that the EPA has the authority—and, in fact, the obligation—to regulate greenhouse gases and instructed the agency to ascertain whether greenhouse gas emissions endanger public health and welfare.

In December 2009, the EPA formally declared that carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases are indeed pollutants that threaten public health and welfare. Under the Obama administration, the agency moved ahead with regulation, despite harsh criticism from conservatives in Congress. In May 2010, the agency issued the nation's first regulations for greenhouse gases: rules for passenger vehicles, which required fuel economy of 35.5 miles per gallon to be phased in by 2016 (Environmental Defense Fund, 2011). The EPA also released a “tailoring” rule, the first regulation of greenhouse gases emitted from large stationary sources, primarily coal-fired power plants, refineries, and large factories. Later last year, the EPA released its fuel economy standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, also to be phased in over a number of years (Environmental Defense Fund, 2011).

Congressional backlash

Despite the Supreme Court ruling, the EPA has been consistently attacked for attempting to regulate greenhouse gases. Conservative efforts to impede the EPA's policy have included litigation, legislation, and funding restrictions. By January 2010, 16 lawsuits had been filed challenging the agency's finding that greenhouse gases endangered the public. The petitioners included states, Republican members of

Congress, industry trade organizations, and the US Chamber of Commerce.

Members of Congress have also tried—but failed—to legislate a halt to the agency's efforts. In 2009, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Republican of Alaska, introduced a resolution that sought to nullify the endangerment finding. Despite wide Republican support and the votes of six Democrats, the bill was defeated. In September 2010, Sen. Jay Rockefeller, Democrat of West Virginia, introduced a bill that sought to delay the regulation of stationary sources of greenhouse gases. It did not pass the Senate and, according to Rockefeller, was designed as more of a “message bill” than anything else (Samuelsohn, 2011). In April 2011, the Senate voted down the Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011, which would have repealed the scientific finding that greenhouse gases endanger public health and safety. In the House, the attempts have been similar—and similarly unsuccessful.

To slow EPA efforts to develop climate rules, members of Congress have also attempted to cut the agency's funding and block its efforts to regulate emissions from cement manufacturing operations and industrial boilers and incinerators. These bills have not passed the House, would likely never reach the floor of the Senate, and would probably be vetoed by President Obama. Such efforts are likely to continue in 2012, however, as Republicans use Congress not so much to legislate as to criticize the EPA with symbolic proposals.

Setbacks for EPA climate regulation

In September 2011, the EPA inspector general released a report questioning the methods used to reach its endangerment finding, contending the agency did

not allow sufficient peer-review for a document of its significance. The report did not evaluate the quality of the EPA's findings, only the processes used (Yehle and Chemnick, 2011). The report questioned whether the supporting technical documents for the finding could be considered a "highly influential scientific assessment," which would require additional peer-review. The EPA maintains that because it did not cover new scientific material, the endangerment finding did not require such an assessment (Eilperin, 2011).

The report has been seized by Republicans as yet another reason to stop EPA regulation. Sen. James Inhofe, Republican of Oklahoma, perhaps the most outspoken congressional critic of climate change policy, claimed the report "confirms that the endangerment finding, the very foundation of President Obama's job-destroying regulatory agenda, was rushed, biased, and flawed... It calls the scientific integrity of EPA's decision-making process into question and undermines the credibility of the endangerment finding" (Yehle and Chemnick, 2011). Inhofe called for Senate hearings on the issue, a call that House oversight committee chairman Rep. Darrell Issa, Republican of California, echoed.

Meanwhile, the EPA announced, also in September, that it would not meet its deadline for issuing rules governing greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and other major sources, marking the second delay of the rules; as of November 2011, a new schedule had yet to be announced.

Finally, in what will surely be seen as a significant blow to EPA regulation, President Obama, appearing to bend to Republican pressure, reversed plans to

tighten EPA smog rules and ordered the agency to deliver a new proposal in 2013. Although the rules do not deal specifically with greenhouse gases, the decision represents a win for Republicans opposed broadly to EPA regulation. If the EPA cannot strengthen smog rules, which are far less contentious than greenhouse gas regulations, how will it succeed in pressing forward on its climate change agenda?

Cities: The front line of attack against climate change

With the federal government mired in ideological warfare, US cities have begun to establish climate action plans and, in some cases, have created targets and timetables for greenhouse gas reductions—feats that most nations have been unable to accomplish. In 2007, for the first time in history, a majority of the world's population lived in cities, and the United Nations has estimated that urban populations will almost double by 2050 (Rosenzweig et al., 2010). Furthermore, cities consume between 60 and 80 percent of energy production worldwide and account for roughly two-thirds of global carbon dioxide emissions (Kamal-Chaoui and Robert, 2009).

Keenly aware of their cities' vulnerability to climate change, municipal-level officials are taking matters into their own hands, identifying the major local sources of greenhouse gas emissions and energy inefficiencies, and developing innovative strategies to address them. Cities are especially vulnerable to climate change: Reductions in precipitation can have serious impacts on water supplies, while sea-level rise, flooding, and increased storm surges can heavily damage local infrastructure.

City governments in the United States have direct authority, independent of the federal government, for decisions on public transportation systems, the built environment, renewable energy, and energy efficiency measures, and the sustainability of service delivery (Kamal-Chaoui and Robert, 2009). And cities are able to create localized solutions. For example, more than two-thirds of New York City's energy use takes place in buildings, compared with a national average of less than one-third, and approximately 75 percent of the city's carbon emissions come from energy use in buildings (PlaNYC, 2007). For that reason, PlaNYC, New York City's long-term sustainability strategy, focuses on energy efficiency in buildings, rather than automobile or industrial efficiency. In 2009, New York enacted ambitious building energy efficiency legislation that covers 22,000 buildings, representing approximately 45 percent of New York's greenhouse gas emissions (PlaNYC, 2010).

There are reasons that city governments can often take greater risks than the federal government. For one, cities tend to be free from the heightened political polarization seen at the federal level. Local policies typically do not draw the news media frenzy that can contribute to the partisan bickering that stifles progress in Washington. As New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia once famously said, "There is no Democratic or Republican way of cleaning the streets."

Success of city-led action

Locally led climate action is, of course, not a panacea. A 2009 study found that among US cities with climate action

plans, only 25 percent enumerate specific local impacts and identify adaptive actions (Bassett and Shandas, 2010). A 2011 study by the design consulting firm Arup and C40, a global coalition of cities tackling climate change, found that although members had allocated funding for adaptation measures, just slightly more than half of responding cities had an adaptation plan.

Still, data collected by C40 indicate that member cities—representing 297 million people and generating 18 percent of global GDP and 10 percent of global carbon emissions—have taken 4,734 actions to tackle climate change; another 1,500 actions are in process (Arup, 2011). All that action has produced real results.

For example, in 2005, New York City was responsible for the annual emission of 58.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent—roughly 1 percent of the total US carbon emissions (PlaNYC, 2007). In December 2006, Mayor Bloomberg introduced PlaNYC, calling for a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 and focusing on sprawl reduction, clean power generation, energy efficiency in buildings, and sustainable transportation (PlaNYC, 2007). According to the plan's 2011 update, the city is on track to achieve that goal, having reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 13 percent from 2005 levels (PlaNYC, 2011). The city has also developed the first official Gotham-specific climate change projections, which are being used to identify more than 100 types of infrastructure that could be impacted by climate change and to develop strategies that will increase the climate resilience of the city (PlaNYC, 2010).

Meanwhile, cities have also begun implementing systems for measurement

of carbon emissions, one of the more difficult issues debated during international negotiations. In 2010, the Clinton Climate Initiative and C40 partnered with the Carbon Disclosure Project to establish a common reporting scheme to track and compare city emissions and reduction efforts.

Technology-driven solutions

Although cities are significant stakeholders in the climate change policy debate, in the United States the federal government alone has the resources to invest in the basic research and development needed to drive innovation and technology breakthroughs in solar energy, battery technologies, and other key components of an alternative energy future.

The recent financial crisis diminished private-sector investment in **renewable energy**. In 2008, public and private investment in renewable energy exceeded investment in fossil fuels. **Growing at incredible rates of more than 50 percent in 2006 and 2007, investment in 2008 totaled \$173 billion globally—a more than fourfold increase from 2004** (UNEP, 2010). **But in the first quarter of 2009, investment in renewable energy fell by more than 50 percent compared with the year before,** the lowest quarterly investment in three years (UNEP, 2009). Capital availability, already low for renewable energy in general, can turn into true capital scarcity during a recession. To compensate, global public-sector investment increased substantially, as governments began to draw on domestic stimulus programs totaling approximately \$188 billion globally for renewable energy and clean technology (UNEP, 2010).

These public-sector funds, however, are now extinguished and a new US stimulus plan appears highly unlikely. Given the huge subsidies that emerging-market governments like China give their solar energy industries—the Chinese government allocated \$30 billion in loans to the top five Chinese solar energy companies in 2010 alone (Lacey, 2011)—the US government needs to find a way to continue investment in the alternative energy sector if it is to compete globally.

In 2010, as technology developed, solar power became cheaper; **the wholesale price of solar panels in fact fell from \$3.30 per watt of capacity in 2008 to \$1.20 in 2011,** primarily due to Chinese manufacturing (Bradsher, 2011). Alternative energy sources will become relatively less expensive and gain market share to the extent that fossil fuel prices are made to reflect their full costs—including pollution, ecosystem damage, health hazards, and other externalities. But the health of the alternative energy sector *and* the US economy also depends on the lowering of the absolute price of renewables. If the goal is to reduce the proportion of gross domestic product spent on energy—and it should be—the federal government can accelerate absolute price reductions by funding basic research and development for renewable energy, energy transmission, energy efficiency, and energy storage.

The United States has a long history of funding basic research that is later adopted by private companies, leading to substantial social benefit and economic growth. **A tax on fossil fuels seems the most efficient way to generate the funds for alternative energy research that hastens the day when renewable energy is less expensive**

than fossil fuels. It is in the United States' economic and foreign policy self-interest for that day to begin sooner rather than later. But the same partisan divide that has stalled any comprehensive approach to greenhouse gas regulation also makes federal support for renewables uncertain in the coming year. Given the Republican Party's stance against tax increases and the science of climate change, tax hikes on fossil fuels seem especially problematic, at least in the short term.

The transition from fossil fuels to renewables will happen eventually; it is inevitable. Fossil fuels are by definition finite, and renewable fuels are not. The questions that remain involve how quickly this transition will take place and whether anyone will be left behind. Ultimately, the planet will benefit regardless of whether Chinese or US companies are investing in and manufacturing solar technology. In fact, as the economy globalizes, it is increasingly less important to know where a company originated and more important to understand where it is headed.

The US role in international negotiation

International discussions have great value; however, they need to be placed in context and seen for what they are. In the climate change arena, they have been successful as education tools, increasing awareness and bringing new items to the agenda. International climate conferences garner intense media attention. This interest peaked in 2009 at Copenhagen as President Obama joined the negotiation table but has since diminished, with far less interest

domestically in the conferences at Cancun and the Durban meetings. And if these conferences serve as great climate change teaching moments, they have been less successful as venues for policy making. There have certainly been accomplishments, but nations are still at odds over fundamental issues, such as the point at which developing countries should be required to meet emission reductions.

The United States has been heavily criticized for its approach to these international negotiations. Given the inability of Congress to craft and pass domestic climate legislation, however, a US decision to sign onto a binding international agreement remains a distant dream. The partisan standoff that prevents meaningful climate and energy policy at the national level will continue to hinder US negotiators' ability to influence international negotiations and to join future agreements. In the short term, the real, substantive action in climate policy and management will involve regulation at the national and, increasingly, local levels as well as advances in technology.

The year ahead

In the United States, the growing partisan divide over climate change and the near-continuous assault on federal regulation restricted the country's ability to effectively respond to global warming in 2011. Fortunately, US cities are filling the gap with far-sighted climate policy. Additionally, the growing cost of fossil fuels has stimulated investment in renewable energy, edging the country closer to commercially viable alternatives to fossil fuels. These trends, if continued, can help provide an alternate

route to climate mitigation, even without international treaties or national legislation. The shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources would of course be greatly hastened by federal action to tax carbon dioxide emissions and use the revenue generated to support solar, wind, and other alternative energy technologies. That action is extremely unlikely to occur unless climate change comes to be seen as a practical, rather than ideological, issue.

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