

Candidate Responses on Air Quality



Breathe Clean Air circulated a questionnaire on air quality to all Comox Valley candidates running in the local government elections in 2018. Multiple reminders were sent to candidates who did not respond. Responses have been collated by municipality or CVRD.

The questions are below and the responses from each candidate are summarized in a table afterwards, along with additional comments provided by some of the candidates. Please visit www.breathecleanair.ca/election2018 for more information.

QUESTIONS:

1. Concern about air quality:

Every winter, there is poor air quality in the Comox Valley due to high levels of harmful fine particulate matter. We experience multiple air quality advisories, and frequently break BC Air Quality Objectives. We are one of the worst communities of 13 monitored in the Georgia Strait Air Zone. In the Comox Valley, we know wood smoke is the source of most of our fine particulates (or "PM2.5").

Everyone's health can be impacted by poor air quality, particularly children, seniors and people with pre-existing conditions. Studies show these particulates increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes, increase the rate of respiratory infections and lung cancer, impact lung development in infants and children, and much more (see Doctors & Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution).

Q. 1 - Are you concerned about winter air quality in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people's health?

2. Ensure multi-pronged strategies:

Mobile air monitoring studies in our area have shown that older neighbourhoods (where wood stove use is typically higher) experience the worst air quality in the Valley. Some areas showed poorer air quality than what was recorded at the government monitor at Courtenay Elementary School. The management of wood stove installation and use falls largely under local government control. Local governments can use a

diversity of approaches to help reduce wood stove pollution. For example, local governments can help raise awareness of the health impacts of wood smoke, support incentives for people to switch to cleaner fuels, prevent wood burning on bad air days, disallow new installations to stop the spread of wood stoves particularly in populated areas, and more. A range of approaches needs to be adopted to ensure success.

Q. 2 - If elected, do you commit to ensuring meaningful, multi-pronged strategies for reducing wood stove pollution are created and implemented?

3. Agree certified stoves not best approach:

Research in the UK has shown that even a brand new eco-certified stove, burning dry wood at high temperatures, will emit more harmful fine particulate matter per hour than 18 newer diesel cars. A government agency in Puget Sound indicates that a well run EPA certified wood stove puts out 582 times more fine particulates a year than a gas furnace or stove. Unlike healthier heating options (e.g. gas and electricity), emissions from a wood stove depend completely on how it is operated. Wood stoves require ongoing public spending for education on burning and for enforcement (when people burn inappropriate materials or create undue amounts of smoke).

Q. 3 - Do you agree that replacing older wood stoves with newer, certified stoves is not the best approach for reducing wood stove pollution in populated areas?

4. Ensure bylaws to protect from poor burning?

Individuals who burn wet wood or other illegal materials, or who do not use their stove appropriately, will create notably more smoke pollution than people who burn dry wood in hot fires. Neighbours of wood stove users can be exposed to very different pollution levels.

Local governments have the authority to develop and enforce nuisance-like bylaws to protect people's use and enjoyment of their own property, and their health and well-being. This is done for noise and other disturbances.

Q. 4 - If elected, do you commit to ensuring there are workable and fair bylaws that will help neighbours protect their families and property from harmful amounts of smoke created by poor burning practices?

5. Support end to yard waste burning?

Burning of yard waste, including leaves and branches, is regulated by local governments. These yard waste fires create a lot of harmful localized smoke, impacting neighbours' use and enjoyment of their own property as well as their health.

Although yard waste fires have been banned in Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland, they are allowed in the rest of CVRD. *(BC regulates larger open burns and agricultural waste fires and these are not the focus of this question).*

Q. 5 - Do you support an end to yard waste burning in CVRD, particularly in more densely populated areas that fall outside of municipal boundaries?

City of Courtenay

Name	Running	1. Concerned about AQ?	2. Ensure Multi-prong strategies?	3. Agree Certified stoves not best approach?	4. Ensure bylaws to protect from poor burning?	5. Support end to yard waste burning?	Comments
Erik Eriksson	Mayor	Y	Y	n/r	n/r	n/r	none
Larry Jangula	Mayor	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	<p>There has been a good deal of discussion on this matter in the past two years. The City of Courtenay has banned open burning, including burning for the purposes of land clearing since 2008. Last December our Council passed a motion to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring all wood burning appliances within the City into compliance with current Federal CSA and Provincial standards within two years. - Provide residents who demonstrate financial need with interest-free loans to enable them to update their appliance. - Homes sold with wood burning appliances are now required to confirm that it conforms to the latest Federal and Provincial certifications and emissions standards, or replace it with a compliant model. - Create Municipal regulations and guidelines outlining the types of fuels allowed to be burned within the City of Courtenay. - Advocate with the Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland and the CVRD to adopt similar regulations. <p>In addition I and the City have been lobbying the Province and the Regional District to restrict slash burning in the areas surrounding the City of Courtenay.</p>
Harold James Long	Mayor	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	A lot of home owners with lower incomes use wood for house hold savings. That is the reason I would not consider a total ban.
Bob Wells	Mayor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	I think there are opportunities to partner with Island Health to go beyond wood stove replacement programs. Targeting problem neighbourhoods with education and enforcement as well as larger grants to help people move to cleaner forms of heating whenever possible.
Will Cole-Hamilton	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	none
Brennan Day	Council	Y	Y	n/r	Y	Y	none

Y == Yes N= No n/r = no response (question skipped)

Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley – See www.breathecleanair.ca/election2018

Name	Running	1. Concerned about AQ?	2. Ensure Multi-prong strategies?	3. Agree Certified stoves not best approach?	4. Ensure bylaws to protect from poor burning?	5. Support end to yard waste burning?	Comments
Darwin Dzuba	Council	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	As a pilot I often see smoke from 100 Km's away drifting into the valley. We need to ban open slash burning from all of Vancouver Island, in order to make a significant improvement in air quality.
David Frisch	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	none
Tom Grant	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	none
Doug Hillian	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Although not sitting on the Regional Board, I have supported development of an Air Quality Advisory Council to address recommended actions. My son is asthmatic so air quality is a significant issue for me.
Kiyoshi Kosky	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	<p>The City of Courtenay plays an integral role in facilitating and contributing to clean air in the valley. Clean air is a community issue requiring a collective, collaborative, and long-term solution. The Official Community Plan speaks to solving this issue, with its provisions for improving residents' quality of life and combating climate change. There are many potential solutions for addressing this important issue, which affects the health and well-being of the citizens in Courtenay. One solution would be for the municipality to introduce a bylaw for all new builds prohibiting the installation of wood stoves.</p> <p>The issue of transitioning to heating alternatives would require both public consultation and an inventory assessment of wood stoves in the City. Additionally, Courtenay should lobby the Regional District and Province for a complete ban on brush burning in valley. Alternative options for farms and the forestry industry to deal with waste would need to be facilitated. The Regional District, BC government, and BC Hydro offer subsidies to switch to heat pumps. Cumberland, CVRD, and Comox should be lobbied to adopt the same policy. Finding a solution to the issue of wood smoke would align perfectly with the Regional Growth Strategy goals of public health, safety, and addressing climate change at the local level. The wood stove solution is also congruent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which Canada has committed to fulfilling.</p>
Jin Lin	Council	Y	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	none

Y == Yes N= No n/r = no response (question skipped)

Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley – See www.breathecleanair.ca/election2018

Name	Running	1. Concerned about AQ?	2. Ensure Multi-prong strategies?	3. Agree Certified stoves not best approach?	4. Ensure bylaws to protect from poor burning?	5. Support end to yard waste burning?	Comments
Penny Marlow	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Everyone needs clean air to breathe and live. Legislation is not the best way to ensure high air quality is achieved in the valley. Our air is affected by activities outside the control of our region and, as we saw with the smoke this past summer, from activities around the world. Air quality becomes a global issue. Therefore, we must also look to education and negotiation to help solve this problem. Yet, we must begin to act locally by controlling open burning and minimizing the use of wood stoves. We should be composting rather than having open burning. Through financial incentives, we can encourage replacement of wood stoves in existing homes and eliminate them in new homes. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions. I hope that I can rely on your members to support my campaign to be a City of Courtenay Councillor. I want to make Courtenay a great place for all of us to live, work and play. Through collaboration and teamwork, we can make this happen.
Melanie McCollum	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	This is an important issue and education of public and politicians is critical to improving our winter air quality.
Wendy Morin	Council	Y	Y	N	Y	N	I would like to see incentives for people who choose to replace wood burning stoves with alternative heat sources.
Judi Murakami	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Educating citizens is key to making changes. Perhaps realtors could ensure that one of the requirements to passing inspection is either no wood burning stove or a certified high efficiency stove.
J. Murray Presley	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	none
Deana Simkin	Council	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Concerns with air quality have to be rectified mindfully. Placing a significant financial burden on citizens with wood burning stoves as a heat source would be irresponsible. Education is important to those that already burn wood and cleaner heat sources are important for new builds and renovations.
Manno Theos	Council	Y	Y	n/r	Y	Y	none
Starr Winchester	Council	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	none

Y = Yes N = No n/r = no response (question skipped)

Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley – See www.breathecleanair.ca/election2018