

Candidate Responses on Air Quality – ALL responses

Breathe Clean Air circulated a questionnaire on air quality to candidates running in the local government elections in the Comox Valley in 2022.

The questions and responses from each candidate in all areas (Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland and Electoral Areas in CVRD) are below, along with additional comments provided by some of the candidates.

You can also view results for each municipality or the regional district elections in separate PDFs on our website: www.breathecleanair.ca.

Notes on the questionnaire and results:

- *All candidates were sent at least one reminder to complete the survey.*
- *Most candidates replied to the survey in full. A few did not, while others skipped certain questions. All questions to which a candidate did not reply are marked “did not reply.”*
- *Candidates who had no publicly available online contact details, or whose details could not be found, are marked as “no contact info.”*
- *Nicole Minions has been named Mayor of Comox by acclamation; nevertheless, she completed the survey, and we have included her responses.*
- *Candidates’ responses are provided in full and are unedited.*

Question 1

Every winter, the Comox Valley experiences poor air quality due to high levels of harmful fine particulate matter. We experience 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).

Are you concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people’s health?

ELECTORAL AREAS A, B, and C

Question 1: Are you concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people's health?

Name	Answer	Comments
Daniel Arbour (A)	Yes	At our last CVRD Board meeting, the North Island Health Officer presented on the fact that air quality, in particular PM2.5, needs to be improved in the Valley, as it is a serious concern.
Gordon Kennedy (A)	Yes	Scrubbers could be used to clean the air for wood burning stoves. Costs about \$300. My father once told me this has been used in commercial applications since the 1930's.
Tamara Meggitt (A)	Yes	The age of the Woodstoves plays an important role in mitigating the effects of woodsmoke
Arzeena Hamir (B)	Yes	I don't think people really understand that the health impacts of breathing in PM2.5 aren't just for children & the elderly. The way PM2.5 dissolves in the blood and crosses the brain barrier - this is not widely understood. Our Medical Health Officer, Dr. Enns, has really tried her best to bring this information to the community but we do need to do more.
Richard Hardy (B)	<i>Did not reply</i>	
Keith Stevens (B)	Yes	I would like to provide everyone about responsible use of there wood stove. That way each user would understand the problem of burning unclean and wood that is not dried properly..
Matthew Ellis (C)	No	
Edwin Grieve (C)	Yes	Unfortunately there are “hot spots” in some urban areas. We need to invest in mobile monitors to better identify who is actually causing the issue

COURTENAY

Question 1: Are you concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people's health?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Aaron Dowker	Did not reply	
Erik Eriksson	Yes	
Bob Wells	Yes	I was there when our Medical Health Officer Charmaine Enns and members of Island Health and BC Health delivered the news of our poor air quality and its negative impact on our health. I found funding through Island Health to get the Comox Valley Airshed Roundtable up and running and look forward to its recommendations. In the meantime the City has moved forward with bylaws to not allow wood stoves in new buildings and have tried to have open dialogue with the Hearth association to create a source of properly seasoned wood for the Comox Valley.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Philip Adams	No contact info	
Steffan Chmuryk	Did not reply	
Will Cole-Hamilton	Yes	
Brennan Day	Yes	
David Frisch	Yes	
Michael Gilbert	Yes	A lot of people in regional district have wood stoves for back-up. New wood stoves are extremely efficient but not everybody has one. Woodstoves are not allowed in Courtenay I believe. But when the power is out, poor people need to stay warm in the winter too.
Doug Hillian	Yes	I have heard from many people whose health is impacted by wood smoke, including members of Breathe Clean Air, have participated in BC Lung Association webinars, and have discussed the issue with our Medical Health Officer.
Evan Jolicoeur	Yes	
Jin Lin	Did not reply	
Melanie McCollum	Yes	This is a significant health concern. Reducing PM 2.5 in Courtenay has been a focus of our policy and by-law work both at City Council and the Regional District Board.
Wendy Morin	Yes	
Lyndsey Northcott	Yes	Particularly I'm concerned about the matter of which individuals are burning. People are burning garbage and wet wood.
Deana Simkin	Yes	
Manno Theos	No contact info	
Starr Winchester	Yes	

Comox

Question 1: Are you concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people's health?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidate</i>		
Nicole Minions	Yes	Air quality is a concern for most residents, and there for a concern of myself as an elected official in the Town of Comox. It's important to know and understand the scientific data on our air quality and the short and long term plans to improve the airy quality for all including our more vulnerable population and community.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Steve M. Blacklock	Yes	
Don Davis	Did not reply	
Kealy R. Donaldson	Yes	I think it's important to recognize the impact that woodstoves have on the environment but this must also be tackled with other issues such as vehicle idling and industry pollution. The Valley is unique with this issue, being the low lying lands trap the smoke from woodstoves and other pollutions, making the air quality poor, during low pressure times throughout the fall and winter seasons. As I understand it, the count in Comox for woodstoves is quite low comparatively to Regional District areas and even Courtenay; with more education and awareness, I think citizens will make the right choice for the environment.
Peter Gibson	Yes	I have concerns about inefficient stoves and poor burning wood. In the rural areas, homes need to burn wood especially during power outages and cold snaps. In urban areas inefficient wood burning either with quality of wood or old stoves are a problem. Many people cannot afford the conversion to electric systems.
Ken J. Grant	Yes	
Chris T. Haslett	Yes	Though concerned about the how this is affecting our residents, I don't believe feel that there should be a ban on wood burning stoves. For many people this is their only source of heat and the stoves that they have in their homes are highly efficient. If properly maintained, wood stoves are great source of heat and keep the fine particulates down.
Jonathan Kerr	Yes	As a family physician, I see more of my patients having exacerbations of asthma and COPD during the winter months. Many of them have informed me that their symptoms are triggered whenever their neighbour(s) are burning wood. Having clean air is an important component to fostering a Healthy Community, Healthy People, and a Healthy Environment.
Jenn Meilleur	Yes	
Ruby Sidhu	Yes	Air quality index in some of the zones where wood is burnt is really low compared to the zones where it's not. This clearly shows that wood burning has a big impact, and we should look into other cleaner resources for energy. I will work towards setting up a rebate program for changing the existing wood burners to heat pumps.
Maureen Swift	Yes	

Cumberland

Question 1: Are you concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley and how it is affecting people's health?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Leslie Baird	Yes	I am concerned about wood smoke in the Comox Valley. Cumberland passed Solid Fuel Burning Appliance bylaw No.1091 in 2018. Banning the installation of wood stoves in new construction. I have witness a definite decrease in wood smoke in the area.
Vickey Brown	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Neil Borecky	Did not reply	
Tanis Frame	Did not reply	
Jesse Ketler	Yes	
Sean Sullivan	Yes	
Troy Therrien	Yes	Anything that affects the health of valley residents is a concern.

Question 2

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.

If elected, do you commit to working to ensure meaningful, multi-pronged strategies for reducing wood stove pollution are created and implemented?

ELECTORAL AREAS A, B, and C

Question 2: Do you commit to working to ensure meaningful, multi-pronged strategies for reducing wood stove pollution are created and implemented?

Name	Answer	Comments
Daniel Arbour (A)	Yes	The Airshed Roundtable should continue its work, building on the strategy that has been drafted.
Gordon Kennedy (A)	Yes	Change zoning so old inefficiently insulated houses can be replaced. I built my house 2 years ago with solar panels and a heat pump for 153\$ per Sq Ft 3 years ago. It can be done at a reasonable cost. Only allow high efficiency stoves like the European Kachelofen or soapstone stoves and make scrubbers mandatory.
Tamara Meggitt (A)	Yes	Working on exchange programs and education around best practices.
Arzeena Hamir (B)	Yes	We need monitors all throughout the valley, not just in the municipalities. In Area B, the neighbourhoods around Huband School are particularly high density and woodsmoke hangs there. Ideally, I would love to see homes in the rural areas move towards heat pumps as their primary source of heating (and cooling in the summers!) with a woodstove just as emergency back up during extended power outages
Richard Hardy (B)	Did not reply	
Keith Stevens (B)	Yes	I would try to promote the use of more modern and efficient wood stoves.
Matthew Ellis (C)	No	We can fine irresponsible burners by giving the power of enforcement to our fire departments, as well as putting out advisories on inversion days.
Edwin Grieve (C)	Yes	Out here in the rural areas, power failures can last hours and even days. Heat pumps are great but modern high efficiency wood stoves are a viable back up

COURTENAY

Question 2: Do you commit to working to ensure meaningful, multi-pronged strategies for reducing wood stove pollution are created and implemented?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Aaron Dowker	Did not reply	
Erik Eriksson	Yes	
Bob Wells	Yes	I have already begun and plan to continue to support strategies that will reduce wood smoke pollution.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Philip Adams	No contact info	
Steffan Chmuryk	Did not reply	
Will Cole-Hamilton	Yes	I do. The City of Courtenay has amended our Nuisance Abatement Bylaw to specifically include a reference to "Nuisance Smoke" "8. No person shall create or allow the emission of smoke that: (a) visibly drifts onto an adjacent property; (b) interferes with a person's use and enjoyment of privately owned real property; or (c) interferes with a person's use or enjoyment of public property including sidewalks, roadways, and parks. " Enforcement will begin with warnings and education, however if these measures are unsuccessful it does allow for a fine of up to \$500. We have also prevented the installation of woodstoves in new construction.
Brennan Day	Yes	
David Frisch	Yes	
Michael Gilbert	Yes	Depends on the meaningful, multi-pronged strategies and what they are.
Doug Hillian	Yes	I have advocated for speedier action through the regional Airshed Roundtable and supported actions taken by the City of Courtenay to transition to cleaner home heating and address problem burning through education and bylaw measures.
Evan Jolicoeur	Yes	
Jin Lin	Did not reply	
Melanie McCollum	Yes	The motions I've introduced over the term in regard to woodsmoke are a demonstration of my commitment to this issue.
Wendy Morin	Yes	
Lyndsey Northcott	Did not reply	
Deana Simkin	Yes	
Manno Theos	No contact info	
Starr Winchester	Yes	

Comox

Question 2: Do you commit to working to ensure meaningful, multi-pronged strategies for reducing wood stove pollution are created and implemented?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidate</i>		
Nicole Minions	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Steve M. Blacklock	Yes	
Don Davis	Did not reply	
Kealy R. Donaldson	Yes	I believe a strong, overall strategy should be focused on to reduce all emissions, including wood stove pollution. The federal government has put a well balanced Emissions Reduction Plan in place, with a target timeline of 2030 for a 40% overall reduction and a net zero for 2050. While this plan primarily focuses on reducing industry emissions, it ties into promoting education and awareness that will directly impact decisions on wood stove pollution at the municipal level.
Peter Gibson	Yes	Science based programs in high density areas are needed. Incentives for conversion will be a must. Rural needs must be recognized.
Ken J. Grant	Yes	We do not allow wood stove installation in new construction in Comox
Chris T. Haslett	Yes	At this time, the Comox council does not have new builds with wood stoves. I would work to help educate those with wood stoves to do proper maintenance as well as updates to ensure that they are burning clean seasoned wood to keep down air pollution.
Jonathan Kerr	Yes	Yes, I agree that a multi-factorial approach is needed including education, incentives, new by-laws, and by-law enforcement. With respect to education, for those currently using wood stoves, we should encourage the use of dry wood so that those with lung conditions are less affected by the smoke. We should also limit wood burning on bad air days, when our lung health is already at risk. For those burning wood because it is their most affordable heating option, we should advocate for and provide financial incentives to help people make the switch from wood to healthier forms of heat. For example, incentives to install a heat pump could be provided which would allow for a healthier form of heat during the winter, while also providing air conditioning during the summer, increasing safety and security during extreme heat waves.
Jenn Meilleur	Yes	The wood smoke issues is part of a broader issue around many people not having access to affordable and clean heating and cooling options for their home - some people can't afford the high cost of baseboard heating and also can't afford to have a heat pump installed. Heat pumps provide more affordable heating and also air conditioning in the summer. This is becoming more urgent and important as we experience more frequent and extreme climate-related weather events - like the extreme cold last winter and the heat dome a year ago. It is the most vulnerable people in our communities who are impacted the most from events like these. To help address this issue of affordability and access, I support innovative financing programs like the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. This program provides access to long-term financing for energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resiliency measures for owners and developers of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and multifamily properties.

		Everybody deserves to have safe, clean, and affordable heating and cooling options in their home.
Ruby Sidhu	Yes	Already existing wood stoves should use only certified dry wood, which can be included in regulations. Rebate programs should be activated from town and province to get them replaced.
Maureen Swift	Yes	

Cumberland

Question 2: Do you commit to working to ensure meaningful, multi-pronged strategies for reducing wood stove pollution are created and implemented?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Leslie Baird	Yes	Cumberland joined the CVRD, City of Courtenay and Town of Comox to work together to address this issue as air movement has no boundaries. We have had meetings with Forest Companies to stop slashing burning in our area.
Vickey Brown	Yes	I think there are opportunities for further education and awareness raising for sure. Especially around when to order wood, how to store it and how to operate the stove efficiently.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Neil Borecky	Did not reply	
Tanis Frame	Did not reply	
Jesse Ketler	Yes	The entirety of the Village of Cumberland was shown to be a "hotspot" and there are multiple days during the winter when my children cannot play outside at Cumberland school. We have already implemented a bylaw that prevents woodstoves from being installed in NEW construction. I have NO intention of repealing the bylaw.
Sean Sullivan	Yes	
Troy Therrien	Yes	

Question 3

A wood stove, even when it is new and run perfectly, will put out far more fine particulate matter than any other source of home heating. 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. 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, all in one fixed location.

This means people living near wood stoves, especially in more densely populated areas, are exposed to far more fine particulate matter than people living near other types of heat. Health experts say there is no safe level of exposure to fine particulate matter and that any reduction will reduce health impacts.

In 2021, CVRD convened the multi-stakeholder Airshed Roundtable to develop and implement a Regional Airshed Protection Strategy to guide air quality actions. To help protect public health, one of the main actions in the draft plan is to transition homes in populated areas away from using wood heating.

Do you agree that we need to work towards transitioning homes in populated areas away from using wood stoves (except in emergencies)?

ELECTORAL AREAS A, B, and C

Question 3: Do you agree that we need to work towards transitioning homes in populated areas away from using wood stoves (except in emergencies)?

Name	Answer	Comments
Daniel Arbour (A)	Yes	The policies implemented by the municipalities should be effective in reducing wood smoke over time.
Gordon Kennedy (A)	Yes	In Germany a friend of mine lives in a town where the town initiated geo thermal heating. It was 7,000 euros to buy in. Now 7 years later she has cheap green heat and hot water. Why are Canadian municipal governments not doing this.
Tamara Meggitt (A)	No	As we face the unknowns of climate change it's important that we look at all options to ensure residents have the ability to stay warm during severe storms causing prolonged power outages. Communication with all stakeholders is important but I can not commit to something I don't have all the information on.
Arzeena Hamir (B)	Yes	Agree. Heat pumps are also very beneficial during heat waves.
Richard Hardy (B)	Did not reply	
Keith Stevens (B)	Yes	I am aware of this problem, however with the high cost of converting, it may be out of reach for some Woodstock users. We as a council have to make sure we consider both sides of the problem before we act.
Matthew Ellis (C)	No	Absolutely not, this is an attack on low income persons, and those on fixed incomes. Wood heat is both an important source of primary heat for many, as well as a secondary source in the event of prolonged power outages.
Edwin Grieve (C)	Yes	Again it boils down to which individuals are causing the majority of the problems. Mobile monitors could identify the worst offenders.

COURTENAY

Question 3: Do you agree that we need to work towards transitioning homes in populated areas away from using wood stoves (except in emergencies)?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Aaron Dowker	Did not reply	
Erik Eriksson	No	
Bob Wells	Yes	Yes. As someone that owns a wood stove I transitioned away from using it except for emergencies when power is out.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Philip Adams	No contact info	
Steffan Chmuryk	Did not reply	
Will Cole-Hamilton	Yes	I believe that we need to help people transition from using wood as a primary heat source, to having wood as a back-up in emergencies. This can best be achieved through low-interest loan programs like PACE that allow people to install alternate heating systems like heat pumps. While grants are helpful, low interest loans will remove the initial financial barrier. As Chair of Help Cities Lead, I have advocated to the Province of BC for a PACE low interest loan program for heat pumps (I worked to get 36 local governments from Kitimat to Vancouver on board - with each passing a resolution endorsing our work and asking that the province implement a PACE loan program). As a result the Province has formally committed to introducing a PACE loan program which is currently under development. The CVRD does offer a grant of \$2000 toward the cost of a heat pump when removing an older stove, with an additional \$2500 if the home is in a a hotspot area like west Courtenay. However, I believe that a PACE program which allows people to upgrade to a heat pump, while allowing them to retain the stove for emergency use, is more likely to see widespread adoption by the public.
Brennan Day	No	
David Frisch	Yes	
Michael Gilbert	Yes	
Doug Hillian	Yes	This was the intent of our prohibition on wood burning appliances in new construction, along with incentives to install heat pumps.
Evan Jolicoeur	Yes	
Jin Lin	Did not reply	
Melanie McCollum	Yes	We are making gains in this regard through rebates and public education, but there is still work to do.
Wendy Morin	No	This is a qualified 'no.' I would like to see how our initiatives are working, and to find ways to assist folks in transitioning, due to equity issues.
Lyndsey Northcott	Did not reply	

Deana Simkin	Did not reply	
Manno Theos	No contact info	
Starr Winchester	Yes	

Comox

Question 3: Do you agree that we need to work towards transitioning homes in populated areas away from using wood stoves (except in emergencies)?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidate</i>		
Nicole Minions	Yes	Yes but in a very long term and collaborative plan. Wood burning appliances have been used as an economic way to heat homes for many generations and it's a slow shift based on access to more efficient and desired heating options. It is not something that can be done quickly or by force without buy-in overall and a collaborative approach with all stakeholders. Intentional long-term change with individual buy in is the best path forward.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Steve M. Blacklock	Yes	However, I have concerns about homes that rely on woodstove as an only heat source and homes with insufficient electrical capacity to upgrade to electric heat pump.
Don Davis	Did not reply	
Kealy R. Donaldson	Yes	Yes, I agree with working towards this transition but we must keep in mind the state of our economy and the expense for some families / households to make this change. Further incentives should be offered to help those who may face economic challenges in adopting this change.
Peter Gibson	Yes	
Ken J. Grant	Yes	Heat pumps are better for most installation in Comox. However there are some homes that are not well suited for heat pumps and are still using old non efficient wood stoves. It makes sense to me that in those cases a high efficiency wood stove would be a good alternative as they are far more efficient than the old ones. Homes with 70 amp services are hard to retro fit with heat pumps and even with the rebates are very expensive leaving people to keep the old wood stove.
Chris T. Haslett	Yes	When homes are being updated and renovated it makes it easier to update the heating and we should work with builders to educate our residents. I do believe that for some this is their only source of heat and to work to take it away would cause considerably more stress on these families in a climate that is already extremely expensive. The cost to update heating can be very large even after rebates and simply isn't possible for some.
Jonathan Kerr	Yes	The Town of Comox already prohibits the installation of wood stoves in new homes and during home renovations. We could also consider creating a new by-law which would require that wood stoves be replaced whenever a home is sold within the Town of Comox. While I

		don't think it would be right for us to force people to remove their wood stoves, these combined measures would allow for the gradual phase-out of wood-burning appliances over time and an improvement in air quality.
Jenn Meilleur	Yes	
Ruby Sidhu	Yes	Changing them to new energy efficient resources is the only option we have to move forward.
Maureen Swift	Yes	

Cumberland

Question 3: Do you agree that we need to work towards transitioning homes in populated areas away from using wood stoves (except in emergencies)?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Leslie Baird	Yes	Yes I agree with that statement, but what we are finding in our Community is that it is the people that are finding other sources of heat. 1. cost of wood 2. its harder to find 3. residents are aging and do not want the work involved in burning wood.
Vickey Brown	No	I'm saying no - because what is an emergency? I think we need to take a harm reduction and equity approach. We can encourage and incentivize people to switch to electric heat systems, but I for those people who are dependent on woodstoves for their heat and have efficient and current woodstoves I think we need to allow them to continue to use their stove. I think people will naturally transition away as we raise awareness and people age out of woodstove use.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Neil Borecky	Did not reply	
Tanis Frame	Did not reply	
Jesse Ketler	Yes	Yes I think the key word there is in POPULATED areas. That is why the municipalities all put forward the same bylaw about no woodstoves in new construction. Woodstoves in less populated rural areas do not have the same considerations and there has been NO change in woodstove regulation for these areas.
Sean Sullivan	Yes	
Troy Therrien	Yes	

Question 4

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 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. They also have authority to regulate wood stove use.

If elected, do you commit to ensuring there are workable and fair bylaws that will help neighbours protect their families and property from harmful wood smoke?

ELECTORAL AREAS A, B, and C

Question 4: Do you commit to ensuring there are workable and fair bylaws that will help neighbours protect their families and property from harmful wood smoke?

Name	Answer	Comments
Daniel Arbour (A)	Yes	Bylaws are always good to protect against egregious situations.
Gordon Kennedy (A)	Yes	Education and bylaws. Make it clear what can and cannot be used and why.
Tamara Meggitt (A)	Yes	I will support ones choice to have a Woodstove but will look at measures to ensure they are using the latest technology and best burning practices.
Arzeena Hamir (B)	No	This is a tough one. I don't know if a bylaw for rural areas will work. We saw a huge push-back in the rural community to the removal of woodstoves with our incentive program. I think mobile monitors and education will need to come first.
Richard Hardy (B)	Did not reply	
Keith Stevens (B)	Yes	Again properly educated each user of the hazards of improperly use of the woodstove may result in a fine.
Matthew Ellis (C)	Yes	Again, I will say that we can give the power of Bylaw Enforcement against irresponsible burners to the fire departments, as well as create advisories for inversion days.
Edwin Grieve (C)	Yes	I believe that, much like inspection of failing septic systems, certification of chimneys and stoves could be conducted every few years

COURTENAY

Question 4: Do you commit to ensuring there are workable and fair bylaws that will help neighbours protect their families and property from harmful wood smoke?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Aaron Dowker	Did not reply	
Erik Eriksson	Yes	
Bob Wells	Yes	The City of Courtenay has already begun the process to create nuisance bylaws to first work with citizens towards compliance before enacting penalties.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Philip Adams	No contact info	
Steffan Chmuryk	Did not reply	
Will Cole-Hamilton	Yes	The City of Courtenay has amended our Nuisance Abatement Bylaw to specifically include a reference to "Nuisance Smoke" "8. No person shall create or allow the emission of smoke that: (a) visibly drifts onto an adjacent property; (b) interferes with a person's use and enjoyment of privately owned real property; or (c) interferes with a person's use or enjoyment of public property including sidewalks, roadways, and parks. " Enforcement will begin with warnings and education, however if these measures are unsuccessful it does allow for a fine of up to \$500
Brennan Day	Yes	
David Frisch	Yes	
Michael Gilbert	Yes	
Doug Hillian	Yes	Courtenay is in the process of installing just such a bylaw, along with a public education program.
Evan Jolicoeur	Yes	
Jin Lin	Did not reply	
Melanie McCollum	Yes	Today's (Sept 26th) Council agenda is introducing new by-law changes to help address poor woodburning practices.
Wendy Morin	Yes	Courtenay is in the process of passing bylaws.
Lyndsey Northcott	Did not reply	
Deana Simkin	Did not reply	
Manno Theos	No contact info	
Starr Winchester	Yes	

Comox

Question 4: Do you commit to ensuring there are workable and fair bylaws that will help neighbours protect their families and property from harmful wood smoke?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidate</i>		
Nicole Minions	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Steve M. Blacklock	Yes	
Don Davis	Did not reply	
Kealy R. Donaldson	Yes	We need a regional approach for this focus in the Comox Valley; it's important that all Municipalities and Regional District Areas are on board, with support from Provincial and Federal levels.
Peter Gibson	Yes	Again, there is a difference between rural and urban wood burning. Chances of power outages great in low population areas.
Ken J. Grant	Yes	I think that education is a good way to inform people about proper burning
Chris T. Haslett	Yes	New and efficient wood stoves have their place and are a great source of heat. I would ensure fair bylaws and work with all residents of Comox.
Jonathan Kerr	Yes	Yes, we should have fair bylaws that promote the health of our community. The health of our residents and community depends on having clean air to breathe. We could also encourage wood burners to use wood moisture meters to ensure their wood is dry before burning. We could also consider creating a community source of dry wood for people to purchase.
Jenn Meilleur	Yes	
Ruby Sidhu	Yes	
Maureen Swift	Yes	

Cumberland

Question 4: Do you commit to ensuring there are workable and fair bylaws that will help neighbours protect their families and property from harmful wood smoke?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Leslie Baird	Yes	We will continue to work with the CVRD and choose bylaws that are fair to the residents after we have public discussions on the topic.
Vickey Brown	Yes	I believe that we should first reach out to the homeowner (woodstove owner) first with education, and support. And follow up with bylaw as needed.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Neil Borecky	Did not reply	

Tanis Frame	Did not reply	
Jesse Ketler	Yes	While local governments can regulate whether a woodstove is permitted or not the use of the stove is different. For example, if there is a backyard fire and someone is burning garbage our Fire Chief can inspect and prevent that but if he see blue smoke coming from the chimney of a home and suspects that they are burning garbage he can knock on the door, and ask that they stop, but he doesnt have the authority to go inside and inspect the woodstove and what is being burned, that is the authority of the Ministry of Environment.
Sean Sullivan	Yes	
Troy Therrien	Yes	

Question 5

To help ensure the wood smoke problem did not get any worse, all three municipalities passed bylaws in the last few years to prevent wood stoves from being installed in new construction. In Comox and Courtenay, the bylaws also said homes that did not already have a wood burning appliance were not allowed to install one after the bylaws were passed.

These bylaws effectively capped the number of wood stoves in these three municipalities, helping to ensure the problem would not get any worse. It also protected people who intentionally moved to cleaner areas from having a wood stove pop up next door.

Do you commit to keeping your municipality's “no new installation” bylaws in place to prevent the increase in the number of wood burning appliances?

ELECTORAL AREAS A, B, and C

Question 5: Do you commit to keeping your municipality's “no new installation” bylaws in place to prevent the increase in the number of wood burning appliances?

Name	Answer	Comments
Daniel Arbour (A)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	
Gordon Kennedy (A)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	We do need to control what type of stoves and how they are used even in rural electoral areas.
Tamara Meggitt (A)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	
Arzeena Hamir (B)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	
Richard Hardy (B)	Did not reply	
Keith Stevens (B)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	This is a program that needs to be addressed through the Regional Growth Strategy policy and it is out of date.
Matthew Ellis (C)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	I'm running in Area C of the CVRD, and I am opposed to any bylaws attempting to limit the installation of wood stoves.
Edwin Grieve (C)	N/A as I am running in a CVRD Electoral Area	

COURTENAY

Question 5: Do you commit to keeping your municipality's "no new installation" bylaws in place to prevent the increase in the number of wood burning appliances?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Aaron Dowker	Did not reply	
Erik Eriksson	Yes	
Bob Wells	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Philip Adams	No contact info	
Steffan Chmuryk	Did not reply	
Will Cole-Hamilton	Yes	
Brennan Day	No	
David Frisch	Yes	
Michael Gilbert	Yes	So, if the power goes out, I have natural gas to stay warm and I know someone in CVRD that has a new woodstove.
Doug Hillian	Yes	
Evan Jolicoeur	Yes	
Jin Lin	Did not reply	
Melanie McCollum	Yes	
Wendy Morin	Yes	
Lyndsey Northcott	Did not reply	
Deana Simkin	Did not reply	
Manno Theos	No contact info	
Starr Winchester	No	

Comox

Question 5: Do you commit to keeping your municipality's "no new installation" bylaws in place to prevent the increase in the number of wood burning appliances?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidate</i>		
Nicole Minions	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Steve M. Blacklock	Yes	
Don Davis	Did not reply	
Kealy R. Donaldson	Yes	
Peter Gibson	Yes	
Ken J. Grant	Yes	
Chris T. Haslett	Yes	I believe that this is already being done in Comox
Jonathan Kerr	Yes	Yes, I am committed to maintaining the Town of Comox's current bylaw preventing the installation of new wood burning appliances. I invite you to visit my website (www.healthycomox.ca) to see my commitments to reducing wood smoke exposure in Comox, as well as my voting record and position on various other issues that are important to the health of our community.
Jenn Meilleur	Yes	There is a growing concern that people won't have a heating option in the case of a power outage. This issue will need to be considered and we will need to propose some viable solutions.
Ruby Sidhu	Yes	No doubt new installations have to be stopped. We will also need replacing old stoves to greener sources
Maureen Swift	Yes	

Cumberland

Question 5: Do you commit to keeping your municipality's "no new installation" bylaws in place to prevent the increase in the number of wood burning appliances?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Leslie Baird	Yes	Since our bylaw was adopted we have had only one request to install a wood stove. Staff followed the bylaw (No).
Vickey Brown	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Neil Borecky	Did not reply	
Tanis Frame	Did not reply	
Jesse Ketler	Yes	Absolutely
Sean Sullivan	Yes	
Troy Therrien	Yes	

Question 6

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 the CVRD and are impacting both neighbours and neighbouring communities. (BC regulates larger open burns and agricultural waste fires and these are not the focus of this question).

In 2021, the CVRD convened the multi-stakeholder Airshed Roundtable to develop and implement a Regional Airshed Protection Strategy to guide air quality actions. To help protect public health, one of the main actions includes eliminating yard waste burning.

Do you support the elimination of yard waste burning in the CVRD?

ELECTORAL AREAS A, B, and C

Question 6: Do you support the elimination of yard waste burning in the CVRD?

Name	Answer	Comments
Daniel Arbour (A)	No	I support the reduction, not elimination. The CVRD Fire Departments recently launched a chipping program in a number of our communities, and I would like to find more permanent funding for this program, which has been well received.
Gordon Kennedy (A)	Yes	It makes me angry that the recycling yard does not have a place for yard waste. I, like some of my neighbors, take our yard waste to friends who have unlimited pick up in other jurisdictions. We need a drop off for yard waste in the recycling yard.
Tamara Meggitt (A)	No	Living in the CVRD often means larger properties. Having the ability to deal with yard waste is of high importance to rural residents. We can implement bans on days when inversions are happening but an all out ban is not something I support.
Arzeena Hamir (B)	Yes	As a farmer, I cringe when I see wood products burned. We need to return that carbon into the soil, not into the air. Thankfully, the rural areas have a chipping program for Fire Suppression that enables home owners to leave their yard waste out to be chipped and taken away. I commit to bringing that program to more neighbourhoods, especially in Area B (which is under Courtenay & Comox Fire Protection).
Richard Hardy (B)	Did not reply	
Keith Stevens (B)	Yes	There is a problem with my answer because the elimination of any type of local recycling program, residents are left with little options.
Matthew Ellis (C)	No	Absolutely not, the Regional District electoral areas are rural, and this is an activity to be expected in a rural area.
Edwin Grieve (C)	No	Unfortunately we can't even get public approval for recycling pick up. The proposed bylaw would also have included twice yearly yard waste pick up as well. Not everyone knows you can take it to the Dump no charge. We need to offer this service

COURTENAY

Question 6: Do you support the elimination of yard waste burning in the CVRD?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Aaron Dowker	Did not reply	
Erik Eriksson	No	
Bob Wells	Yes	
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Philip Adams	No contact info	
Steffan Chmuryk	Did not reply	
Will Cole-Hamilton	Yes	
Brennan Day	Yes	
David Frisch	Yes	
Michael Gilbert	No	I don't think I have enough information at this time to make an informed decision and you did not give an alternative to "no".
Doug Hillian	Yes	
Evan Jolicoeur	No	Would want to know more about the usage in regional areas, and impacts on farming, and large rural properties. Do Regional area residents have green waste pickup?
Jin Lin	Did not reply	
Melanie McCollum	Yes	Yes, I would like to see this change, but this is a matter for the Electoral Areas to address, and is not my jurisdiction as a City Councillor.
Wendy Morin	No	I'd like more info as I am not an electoral area director.
Lyndsey Northcott	Did not reply	
Deana Simkin	Did not reply	
Manno Theos	No contact info	
Starr Winchester	Did not reply	

Comox

Question 6: Do you support the elimination of yard waste burning in the CVRD?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidate</i>		
Nicole Minions	No	I do not have enough information at this time.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Steve M. Blacklock	Yes	Already not allowed in Comox
Don Davis	Did not reply	
Kealy R. Donaldson	Yes	With the new Waste Management facility in Cumberland, there is very little need for yard waste burning. It's important to recognize the human connection to fire and the ability to burn using personal fire pits and opening burning at the .5 M x .5M subscribed sizing, as per CVRD regulations.
Peter Gibson	No	
Ken J. Grant	Yes	
Chris T. Haslett	No	
Jonathan Kerr	Yes	A ban on yard waste burning is already in effect in the Town of Comox. I would support a ban of yard waste in any well-populated CVRD regions, especially those close to the municipalities. However, I would leave this decision to the residents of the CVRD and their elected officials.
Jenn Meilleur	Yes	
Ruby Sidhu	Yes	
Maureen Swift	Yes	

Cumberland

Question 6: Do you support the elimination of yard waste burning in the CVRD?

Name	Answer	Comments
<i>Mayoral candidates</i>		
Leslie Baird	Yes	We felt it was responsibility to stop this practice from happening within the Village. The risk to public health is too great.
Vickey Brown	Yes	I understand that these yard waste items are accepted to the landfill for composting and I believe that this is the best way to deal with yard waste (apart from leaving leaves on the ground or composting on site). I would also support reducing fees for compostable material at the landfill to encourage this shift.
<i>Councillor candidates</i>		
Neil Borecky	Did not reply	
Tanis Frame	Did not reply	
Jesse Ketler	No	In Cumberland we started the yard waste curbside pick-up when we instituted the ban on yard waste fires so that we could provide an alternative to burning. I am not sure of what alternatives are available to the rural areas so I would leave that to the Area Directors to investigate.
Sean Sullivan	Yes	
Troy Therrien	Yes	