

August 25, 2022

Dear mayor and council

Karen and I participated in the 2010 games as volunteers and like many others enjoyed and marvelled at how the games evolved.

We write to share our ongoing frustration that the massive task to transition from fossil energy and products and to reduce green house gases keeps getting such a low priority. The support for the bid is just a larger than usual example of how climate action is often put aside and other events take precedence. Just think if our essential environmental challenge and climate goals were given the time, funding and priority that the Olympic games bid and the preparations for the games will get between now and 2030.

In a report in April of this year (2022) IPCC reports state...“Greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 and reduce by 43% by 2030. We need to move swiftly to a low-carbon society, but it will require an enormous effort by governments, businesses, and individuals.”

It just seems like our society is still living in a time in the past where the climate challenge was not so generally known or understood as it is now. Yet today we see lip service and greenwash as our fossil powered status quo carries on as it has for decades. Things that perpetuate our fossil powered status quo are still the priority. Yes there are some changes being made but as Greta Thunberg said “I know you are trying but just not hard enough. Sorry.” There is an assumption that 2030 will be just like 2010 when report after report from climate science all over the world warns otherwise. Jim Skea, IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair, said: “It’s now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C . Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible.”

We are happy to read that the “International Olympic Committee (IOC) is keen to have the 2030 events be the first positive climate Games, with organizers responsible for implementing zero-carbon solutions for all Games' activities. Reps from the B.C. bid have indicated their willingness to work with and follow all climate plans to achieve this goal.” What are the plans and goals? What does this really mean and how might it be enforced? How will it be measured and by whom. Are these weak and general statements just more greenwash? What of the permanent climate goals of Whistler that are to be completed in 2030? What of Canada’s contribution to the global reduction of emissions by 43% deemed necessary?

Should the IOC add a new medaled competition to be added to the games for the country meeting emission reduction goals? Should the IOC suspend the games and instruct the nations of the world to focus on resolving the threat of climate catastrophe so that there will be an inhabitable planet to hold future games? Would that get the attention of what seems to be a generally denialist population?

We have listened to good words from this council regarding GHG emission reductions and other environmental topics but there has been a relatively low priority on real actions. If only the excitement and enthusiasm, the priority, displayed for the games bid was directed to achieving climate goals. You are not alone as we see the same lack of priority from Provincial and Federal leaders. Do we add indigenous leaders to the list?

We hope that if here or wherever the games are awarded that they become a metric for making climate action at least as high a priority as a successful games. (a good start would be to declare that the behemoth 7 million BTU 2010 cauldron will not be lit but instead be a cold relic of a fossil reliant past) Whatever can be done to use these indigenous led games as a beacon of hope and demonstration of what can be accomplished if it is given appropriate priority.

Yours truly,

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