



Board of Education

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
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January 19, 2022

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BC Utilities Commission CEO & Chair
Premiere John Horgan
Minister of Education Whiteside
Minister of Finance Robinson
Minister of Environment Heyman

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Dear Climate Action Partners:

RE: BC Hydro Net Metering Cap

At its Regular Board meeting of December 13, 2021, the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) carried the following resolution:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) advocate to lift BC Hydro's 100kW net metering cap by advocating directly with BC Hydro and the BC Securities Commission, and through BCSTA, to BC Hydro, BC Securities Commission, the Premier of British Columbia, Minister of Education, Minister of Finance, Minister of Environment and Clean BC.

School Districts are in a unique position to show leadership in mitigating and adapting to address the impacts of climate change. We are a member of the public sector, with a unique and special responsibility to not only manage our resources, such as our buildings and infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner, but to also support an environmental ethic. This includes the importance of sustainability in our educational programs.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

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This runs up against a challenging reality; the current provincial approach to school district capital funding limits school district's ability to address joint provincial and local obligations to reduce emissions. This results in districts being unable to take more meaningful and effective steps to address the climate emergency through environmentally sustainable investments in our capital assets.

In July 2021, the Ministry of Education announced the replacement of Cedar Hill Middle School in School District No. 61. The Board committed to contributing \$3.6 million to the project to bridge the cost of a replacement school, opposed to renovating the existing school. The Board also pursued a further investment to build an energy efficient school, utilizing ground source and air source heat pumps and to generate as much renewable energy on site as it consumed in a typical year using photovoltaic solar panel technology. During the information gathering stage prior to the Board motion to commit funds to eliminate the need for natural gas for the new build, the Board was advised that even should it wish to invest in this infrastructure, the option was unavailable due to the 100kW net metering cap set in place by BC Hydro and BC Utilities Commission.

Had the net metering cap not been restricted, the replacement Cedar Hill Middle School could have been built with 100% renewable energy infrastructure. As it stands now with the metering cap, the new building that will serve the community for the next 60-100 years will rely on natural gas as an energy backup.

BC Hydro and the BC Utilities Commission need to recognize that municipalities and school districts build larger institutional buildings, such as schools, that necessarily exceed the 100kW net metering cap due to size and program requirements and should not be treated as if they are operating a solar farm. Regulations need to be adapted to allow school districts and municipalities to build their facilities as fully Net Zero.

Students in School District No. 61, and around the world, are calling on leadership to do something to secure their access to a safe and livable planet for their futures. The Board of School District No. 61 is committed to doing its part in reducing emissions and creating the very future our students are calling for. Therefore, the Board requests provincial climate action partners show leadership and do their parts to remove the BC Hydro net metering cap and allow school districts to use whatever energy means possible to create sustainable buildings for students today and the future, and to help fulfill the provincial government's climate action objectives.

Sincerely,



Ryan Painter
Chair, Board of Education

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Cc: Board of Education, SD61
Deb Whitten, Superintendent, SD61
Kim Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, SD61
Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities
Chris Brown, Deputy Minister, Education
Heather Wood, Deputy Minister, Finance
Kevin Jardine, Deputy Minister, Environment
BC School Boards

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