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Comox Valley Residents Support Wood Burning

Survey Reveals that Residents Want Alternatives to Bylaws Restricting Wood Stoves

COURTENAY: Residents of the Comox Valley recently responded to a survey (conducted by Leger) regarding opinions towards wood burning. 300 local respondents aged 18 and older participated in the telephone survey, which took place from September 23 to 29, 2022.

Results reveal a clear mismatch between the Comox Valley Regional District's (CVRD) current policy direction and local public opinion. Among residents, there is strong agreement (92%) that people should be able to upgrade their old inefficient heating systems with a newer, cleaner burning system of their choice. Furthermore, 79% agreed that this choice should be left up to residents, not local government.

Residents also indicated how bylaws restricting wood stove installation will influence their vote during the upcoming election. Generally, residents are more likely to oppose these bylaws (31%) than support them (20%), and after learning about the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada's (HPBAC) Three Pillar Plan for addressing regional air quality, over half (56%) of residents said they were likely to vote for a municipal candidate who supports the HPBAC solution.

As an alternative solution to addressing air quality in the Comox Valley, HPBAC presented the Three Pillar Plan to local government in 2021. The plan proposes a comprehensive public education program on better burning practices, along with a targeted wood stove exchange program, and a dry and seasoned wood lot to make proper fuel more accessible. Collectively, these activities will translate into cleaner burning and improved air quality throughout the community.

"This reaffirms what the community wants," said Jeff Loder, Director of Public Affairs for HPBAC. "When you compare these findings with the current discourse around wood burning, public opinion just doesn't line up with what we've seen from the CVRD."

The survey showed that just over one-quarter of Comox Valley residents use wood burning for at least some of their home heating. When asked about the practicality of electric heating, only 30% of residents believe it's feasible for everyone in the region to switch to 100% electric heating.

"Residents of the Valley rely on their wood stoves, and these results support that," said Jamie Payne, Owner & Operator of Norse Heating in Comox. "We face frequent power outages and other available heating options are often too expensive, so it's not hard to understand why wood stoves are a necessity for so many people."

Results also showed that public awareness of bylaws limiting the installation of wood stoves has increased over the last year. "The results illustrate that public consultation was insufficient, and the people are looking for a better way forward" said Tomi Wittwer, Owner & Operator of Comox Fireplace and Patio.

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada is the national not-for-profit industry association that represents businesses which produce, sell, or service appliances and accessories in the hearth and barbecue industries in Canada.

For more information on HPBAC's Three Pillar Plan, visit: <https://saveourwoodstoves.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/New-TPP-Presentation.pdf>



To learn more about the Comox Valley bylaws that restrict the installation of wood stoves, visit:
https://saveourwoodstoves.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/HPBA_11536_Bylaw_Info_Sheet.pdf

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