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Fraser Valley Regional District Responds to Metro Vote on Waste Plan

CHILLIWACK B.C: The Fraser Valley Regional District, representing communities east of Metro Vancouver, is critical of today's decision by the Metro Vancouver Board to support incineration either in-region or out-of-region, in the Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management plan prepared by Metro staff.

The Metro Board decision comes despite widespread concern and controversy regarding the waste-to-energy incineration strategies in the plan as a means of disposing of some 500,000 tonnes of garbage every year.

The plan was debated at length by Metro's Board today and will now go to provincial Environment Minister Barry Penner for final approval.

“This decision may have far-reaching impacts on the Fraser Valley air shed and on our ability to reach waste reduction targets across the region. If an in-region incinerator is ultimately approved, it doesn't solve the garbage problem at home. It exports the problem, in the form of air pollution, to the Fraser Valley,” said Ross.

The Fraser Valley Regional District has worked aggressively to reduce emissions in the Fraser Valley and have achieved a 35-per-cent reduction in the last two decades. Despite these efforts, ozone levels continue to be a serious concern in the Valley and are the highest in the province.

Metro Vancouver is the largest contributor of emissions and greenhouse gases that find their way into the Valley from all sources including industry, transportation and agriculture. Wind patterns and geography create a funnel-like effect that means that airborne contaminants from Metro and northwest Washington build up in the Fraser Valley air shed.

Said Ross, “When we look at who is responsible for air pollution in the Fraser Valley, people who live, work and farm in the Valley contribute the least to the problem. And yet we must deal with the impacts on local health and the environment. Deciding to incinerate is plainly a step backward.”

The Fraser Valley Regional District will be appealing to the Minister of the Environment to remove waste-to-energy incineration from the solid waste plan.

To find out more about air quality in the Fraser Valley, visit www.airqualitymatters.ca.

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