THE CITY OF VICTORIA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Chevron
6001 Bollinger Canyon Road
San Ramon, CA 94583
USA

November 28, 2017

Attn. CEO of Chevron

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

As Mayor and Council of the City of Victoria, in British Columbia, we are writing to secure your commitment to pay your fair share of the costs of climate change that face our community. Climate change is the direct result of pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels, including from your products.

We are beginning to see the impacts of climate change directly affect our region and the infrastructure and services that we provide as a local government to our residents (detailed below). It would be financially irresponsible of us to assume that our taxpayers will bear the full costs of these impacts of fossil fuel pollution, while your shareholders continue to benefit financially from the sale of fossil fuels.

We know that individual consumers, and our community members, use fossil fuels. However, your industry has played a large role in creating the risks and costs that we now face as a community. Your company has made many billions of dollars from products that you presumably knew would harm our communities.[1] You have had the power to move your company towards a more sustainable business model since you first became aware of the impacts of climate change, decades ago, but have not done so. You cannot make billions of dollars selling your product, knowing that it is causing significant financial harm to communities around the world, and not expect to pay for at least some of that harm.

When James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company selected the southern tip of Vancouver Island as the site of Fort Victoria, the region's Garry Oak meadows reminded him of the cultivated fields of England. He didn't realize at the time that this unique ecosystem had been managed for thousands of years by the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, who harvested Camas bulbs from the meadows as an important food source.

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1 https://www.smokeandfumes.org/fumes, last accessed 23 September 2016.

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The Garry Oak Meadow ecosystem – although unfortunately much diminished and one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world – remains a central feature of the City of Victoria, and we take seriously our responsibility to pass it on to future residents. Numerous studies have shown that that climate change will put that goal at risk[2] – and that our work to ensure that the ecosystem can survive shifts in our regional climate is urgent.[3]

Of course, climate change brings with it other, direct impacts on our infrastructure and services, and on our residents. We offer the example of the Garry Oak Meadow ecosystem to illustrate an important climate impact, and associated costs, that are unique to our region.

In addition, like other coastal communities in BC and around the world, sea-level rise is a serious concern. Our Inner Harbour, a central feature of our downtown, is the point of arrival for many tourists and a source of pride for our residents. For this business and tourism district, higher sea-levels, especially when combined with storm-surge events, will mean huge economic cost. It has been estimated that 1 metre of sea level rise in combination with a storm surge would result potential business disruption losses of Cdn $415,557 per day (based on annual averages).[4]

Outside of the downtown, much of our coastline is characterized by cliffs, much of it soft and vulnerable to increased coastal erosion. The needed protection efforts will likely result in significant costs to our community.

Drought and increased winter storms associated with climate change are also predicted for our region.

Planning, building and maintaining local infrastructure is made more costly by climate change. Victoria is in the process of developing a Climate Leadership Plan to do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, buildings and waste. The City is also investing in our own infrastructure to ensure we are able to maintain resilience and adapt to the changing climate and the impacts to our operations, utilities and services. At present we are only beginning to understand the potential magnitude of increased local costs for both climate change mitigation and adaptation. We know that cities didn't cause the climate problem on their own and we can't solve it on our own. And we know that costs will increase as climate change impacts worsen.

As a community Victoria has committed to work towards 100% renewable energy by 2050. We recognize that everyone is going to need to do their part to address climate change. We

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2 Pellatt MG, Goring SJ, Bodtker KM, Cannon AJ (2012) Using a Down-Scaled Bioclimate Envelope Model to Determine Long-Term Temporal Connectivity of Garry oak (Quercus garryana) Habitat in Western North America: Implications for Protected Area Planning. Environ Manage 49:802–815; Bachelet D, Johnson BR, Bridgham SD, Dunn PV, Anderson HE, Rogers BM (2011) Climate Change Impacts on Western Pacific Northwest Prairies and Savannas. Northwest Sci 85:411–429.

3 Pellatt, M.G. & Gedalof, Z. Biodivers Conserv (2014) 23: 2053. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-014-0703-9.

4 AECOM. Capital Regional District: Coastal Sea Level Rise Risk Assessment (Victoria, BC: Capital Regional District, 2015), p. 36.

are asking you to take responsibility for the harm caused by your products and to take action to move to a more sustainable business model.

The peer-reviewed research of Richard Heede reveals that 3.34% of the greenhouse gas emissions already in the global atmosphere originate from your company's operations and products.[5] In our view, this represents your fair share of the costs facing Victoria. Will you confirm that you are willing to pay 3.34% of Victoria's climate-related costs going forward?

Sincerely,

Lisa Helps
Victoria Mayor

[5] Heede, R. Climatic Change (2014) 122: 229. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-013-0986-y; See also http://climateaccountability.org/carbon_majors_update.html.