

Candidate: Lee Rankin

Riding: Burnaby

- 1. Many communities don't know how much climate change is costing them at present, and will cost in the future. Will you commit to putting systems in place to identify and track those costs?**

Yes. Burnaby is not a coastal community, however, there is no question that the hotter, drier summers increase city costs such as increased power for air conditioning in public buildings, increased cost to maintain city landscaping and green space, and increased fire risks to name a few issues the city faces. Burnaby experiences flooding in the Still Creek area and increased winter rainfall likely due to global warming and this affects businesses in the area and city infrastructure. It is important that all Lower Mainland communities monitor the effects of climate change on costs to the local communities. Some of the costs, like the need for enhancing berms and dikes in coastal Lower Mainland communities will be borne by all B.C. residents and Canadians.

- 2. Will you work to develop and implement climate adaptation plans to reduce the harm that climate change causes in your community? How will you fund climate adaptation?**

Yes. Any mitigation measures Burnaby needs would have to be funded through city budgets unless municipalities can negotiate with the provincial and federal governments to share a portion of the money senior governments receive from fossil fuel royalties and other taxes such as provincial and federal carbon taxes. Negotiated funds could be directed towards mitigating the cost of climate change on local municipalities.

- 3. Will you commit to protecting taxpayers by seeking to recover a fair share of climate costs from the fossil fuel companies who profit from selling products that result in greenhouse gases? Specifically, if elected, would you ask your Council to:**

- a. Send Climate Accountability letters from your community to major fossil fuel producers demanding that they pay their fair share of local climate costs caused by their activities and products?**

Climate Accountability letters are probably not the most effective method of requiring fossil fuel producers to share the costs of climate costs caused by their activities and products. The most important thing for local government to do is to press the federal and provincial government to enact and/or strengthen carbon taxes and ensure that revenue from these taxes is shared with local government to mitigate climate change caused by fossil fuels. Currently, the federal and provincial governments share in the cost of planned rapid transit projects in the Lower Mainland that contribute to the reduction in greenhouse gases by creating transit alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. Revenues from carbon taxes and royalties can be increased and directed to municipalities for the purposes of mitigating the damage caused by climate change. In other parts of the province, fossil fuel taxation and carbon tax could be used, for example, to accelerate the reforestation of thousands of hectares of forest lost because of increased forest fires that are the product of climate change.

b. Press the province of BC to enact Liability for Climate-related Harms laws to give municipalities and others greater legal certainty, lower costs and timely resolutions if they sue to recover climate damages from fossil fuel companies?

The best strategy for reducing reliance on fossil fuels and putting the costs of climate change caused by fossil fuel producers and distributors is to support provincial and federal carbon taxes, general taxes and royalties on fossil fuel producers as a means of encouraging the movement away from fossil fuel use at the industrial, commercial and consumer level. Increased taxation revenue can be used to support local and provincial governments in mitigating the effects of climate change and will contribute to a reduction in the use of fossil fuel as industry, business and consumers look at greener alternatives. I am a practicing lawyer, and, in my opinion, the idea of timely, certain resolution of climate change damage via litigation is problematic given the resources available to the fossil fuel companies and the certainty that any local legislation to recover damages from fossil fuel companies would be hotly litigated as far as possible, making timely resolution of these times of damage claims highly unlikely. The federal and provincial governments have the power to effectively regulate and tax the fossil fuel sectors to combat climate change and to share additional revenue with local government if they choose to use their legislative powers accordingly.

c. Explore legal action against fossil fuel companies to recover a share of local climate costs?

Local governments should add their collective voice and weight to ensure that the provinces and the federal government tax and regulate the fossil fuel industries sufficiently to account for the damage to the environment caused by climate change. Litigation by local governments to recover costs attributed to climate change exacerbated by fossil fuel producers is the least effective route for local government to deal with this issue. The collective power of municipalities through the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) should be used to ensure that fossil fuel producers are held to account for the effects of climate change caused by their products. Local towns and cities can also lobby their local Members of Parliament and members of provincial legislatures to demand that legislation curtailing the damage caused by fossil fuel and increasing revenues from fossil fuel producers are enacted and enforced.

4. In your view, why is it important (or not) to hold fossil fuel companies accountable for your community's climate costs?

Climate change is having a devastating worldwide impact as extreme weather events are affecting worldwide crop production and causing billions of dollars of damage from typhoons, hurricanes and tornadoes. Extreme heat and drought is contributing to hunger, famine and civil conflict. Communities and countries are being to see the effects of sea-level rise. Climate change is the most important issue affecting the world community and there is a real urgency and need to take effective actions now to protect the planet, future generations and biodiversity. Burnaby, like other Lower Mainland communities, is already seeing some effects of global climate change. For the past two summers, Burnaby has experienced deteriorating air quality conditions caused by the extreme forest fire seasons in B.C. The periods of poor air quality created dangerous situations for seniors, children and those suffering from compromised lung

health such as asthma sufferers. There is no question that fossil fuel-driven climate change is responsible for these problems.