



Press Release

CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM ISSUES EARTH HOUR CHALLENGE TO COQUITLAM

Port Coquitlam, BC – March 23, 2009 ... The City of Port Coquitlam today issued a friendly challenge to the City of Coquitlam to see which community will save more energy during Earth Hour, set for Saturday, March 28 from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

This will be Port Coquitlam's second year to join in the global climate-change initiative, during which all non-essential lights and power sources are turned off for an hour. During the 2008 Earth Hour, Port Coquitlam reduced its energy use by 6.7 per cent – more than any of its neighbours and more than three times the two per cent average across the province. North Vancouver, with its seven per cent savings, was the only B.C. community to top Port Coquitlam.

"I'm very proud of our community's participation last year," Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore said. "Our neighbour Coquitlam was not too far behind with a 5.6 per cent savings, but I think that with a little friendly competition, we can both do better."

The City of Port Coquitlam will turn off all lights and non-essential appliances during Earth Hour on March 28, and is asking local residents and businesses to do the same. City Council officially proclaimed Earth Hour at its March 23 meeting.

The Earth Hour movement was started in 2007 by the World Wildlife Federation and the City of Sydney, Australia. During the inaugural event on March 31, 2007, 2.2 million homes and businesses in Sydney turned off their lights for one hour. During the 2008 Earth Hour, 50 million homes and businesses around the world participated. The savings in B.C. alone was 125 megawatts, the equivalent of turning off 2.5 million lights. The Earth Hour goal for 2009 is one billion participants.

Ideas for Port Coquitlam families participating in Earth Hour include: having dessert or a late dinner by candlelight, playing a game using flashlights, bundling up and going for a walk, or having a candlelight discussion about ways individuals can help reduce their impact on climate change, such as switching off lights when leaving the room, changing to energy-efficient light bulbs and turning off appliances when not in use.

"Earth Hour is about more than climate change – it's about demonstrating that each one of us has a role to play in helping our environment," Mayor Moore said. "It's a way for our entire community to come together for a common purpose, and it's also a good fit with our City's many other environmental initiatives."

Environmental stewardship has grown into a year-round focus for the City. Initiatives include:

- replacing all computer monitors with low-energy LCD screens (for a projected annual savings of \$4,000 per year),
- introducing Metro Vancouver's first curbside pickup of kitchen green waste,
- using a Sustainability Checklist to ensure all development balances environmental, social and economic values,
- using alternative fuels in City vehicles, and
- Council consideration of a bylaw promoting the use of electric cars.

In 2009, the City of Port Coquitlam will be developing its first Environmental Strategic Plan as part of its efforts to become an environmental leader.

More information about Earth Hour can be found at www.portcoquitlam.ca/earthhour or by visiting www.earthhour.org.

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