

Dear government leaders of the Columbia Valley,

We are writing this letter to you on behalf of Columbia Youth Environmental Action (Columbi-YEA) and the DTSS Climate Change club to ask you to commit to powering our homes, buildings, transportation, and other infrastructure with 100 per cent renewable energy sources by 2050 at the latest.

We recognize and applaud local government's existing initiatives on climate change adaptation and mitigation, such as the RDEK's heat pump subsidy, the DOI's decision to hire an Environmental Planner, and more. However, as the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent report](#) made explicitly clear, an energy transition away from fossil fuels toward renewables is a vital action for securing a liveable planet.

Currently, 10 Kootenay governments have committed to transition to 100 per cent renewables by 2050. These governments include Castlegar, Kalso, Nelson, New Denver, the RDCK, Rossland, Silverton, Slocan, Warfield, and, most recently, Golden. While making the transition will be a challenge, there is good news. Firstly, the technology needed to make this transition already exists. While there will undoubtedly be costs associated with an energy transition of such scale, the provincial budget currently allocates [\\$76 million for local government climate action projects](#). Secondly, there are roadmaps from other communities we can follow to help us achieve the transition. For example, the [West Kootenay Renewable Energy Plan](#) (2020) is a comprehensive document that identifies the essential actions local governments must take, from the perspective of policy, infrastructure, and outreach, to achieve a transition to 100 per cent renewables by 2050 at the latest. We understand that it may be challenging to gain citizen support for this initiative. However, groups such as the City of Vernon's [Climate Action Advisory Committee](#) are valuable templates for how to make a just and democratic transition to renewables.

This goal is feasible. Our actions, combined with those of other Kootenay governments, would make an impact. The collective transition would significantly lower emissions, and our region would also serve as an inspiration for other rural areas across the country. Furthermore, it's the just thing to do. As young people, many of us are deeply worried about our future. We wouldn't be writing this letter if we weren't. Youth like ourselves will experience the devastating effects of inaction, but to what extent remains an open question. We understand that this challenge seems daunting, but by taking responsibility for shifting away from the catastrophic trajectory we're currently on, we can be part of a greater movement in the Kootenays to transition to 100 per cent renewables. Together, we can and will make a difference if, and only if, we act.

We ask that you include the proposals in this letter in your next meeting agenda.

Signed,

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