
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020ENV0064-002142
Dec. 29, 2020

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Funding announced for wood stove exchange rebate program

VICTORIA – Communities throughout the province will benefit from cleaner air as a result of \$270,000 from the 2020-21 Wood Stove Exchange Program.

The program provides incentives to people replacing old, smoky wood stoves with cleaner options.

A total of 19 communities have applied for funding to continue their exchange program, or have sufficient funding from previous years to continue offering rebates to their residents.

“This program has been very successful in encouraging people to switch to cleaner wood stoves or different technologies entirely,” said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. “I’m very pleased these local governments are continuing to support this program and are working with the Province and health agencies to reduce harmful emissions.”

Burning wood creates significant air pollution by increasing particulate matter in the air. Also known as PM 2.5, this fine particulate matter can cause health problems. The Wood Stove Exchange Program reduces local air pollution by helping people trade out old wood stoves for cleaner sources of heat, such as electric heat pumps, gas or pellet stoves, or new emission-certified wood stoves.

Eligible British Columbians can apply for the following incentives:

- \$250 for changing to a cleaner-burning wood stove;
- \$400 for changing to a qualifying electric heat pump, gas or propane stove, or pellet-fuelled stove; and
- \$500 for those who live in “Red Zone” communities. These are areas where fine particulate matter exceeds the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards. Residents can use the money to change to a heat pump, gas or propane stove, or pellet-fuelled stove.

The annual program has helped replace around 9,000 old stoves with cleaner options. Since 2008, the Wood Stove Exchange Program has provided more than \$3.2 million. This year’s fund will distribute \$270,000 through the British Columbia Lung Association, which also educates the public about alternatives to wood stoves.

“This program continues to help remove particulates from the air, while raising awareness about the dangers of burning wood,” said Christopher Lam, CEO, B.C. Lung Association. “People throughout our province should understand that wood smoke can cause significant harm.”

Fifteen communities that were previously approved for funding have successfully reapplied. In addition to those recipients, four regions have funds left over from last year and will continue

to distribute rebates to residents.

Quick Facts:

- In British Columbia, all new wood stoves and inserts sold must meet Canadian Standards Association or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emission standards.
- People using wood stoves should use dry, well-seasoned wood cut into pieces 10 to 15 centimetres in diameter. Burning “green” or wet wood produces significantly more smoke.
- Firewood should be seasoned for at least six months. Burning seasoned wood saves money by reducing wood consumption by 25%.
- By burning smaller, hotter fires to ensure complete combustion of the wood, very little smoke should be visible coming from the chimney, with no smell of smoke indoors.
- Wood-burning appliances should be inspected and cleaned at least once a year by a certified technician.

Learn More:

Wood Stove Exchange Program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-pollution/smoke-burning/exchange>

B.C. Lung Association educational resources, including a pamphlet about wood smoke and lung health:

<https://bc.lung.ca/protect-your-lungs/air-quality-lung-health/wood-smoke>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

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BACKGROUND

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2020-21 Wood Stove Exchange Program recipients

Funding for the 2020-21 wood stove exchange program:

- Bulkley Valley and Lakes District Airshed Management Society: \$12,700
- Comox Valley Regional District: \$29,000
- Cowichan Valley Regional District: \$42,000
- Village of Valemount: \$1,700
- City of Kamloops: \$23,000
- Metro Vancouver Regional District: \$60,000
- Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable: \$7,000
- Central Okanagan Regional District: \$9,500
- Regional District of Central Kootenay: \$15,000
- Regional District of Nanaimo: \$22,000
- Lavington Life Society (Coldstream/Lumby/Cherryville): \$8,600
- qathet Regional District: \$13,000
- Strathcona Regional District: \$10,500
- Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society and Sea to Sky Clean Air Society: \$11,000
- Golden and District Air Quality Committee: \$5,000

Communities with sufficient funds from previous years to continue offering rebates:

- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
- District of Vanderhoof
- Fraser Valley Regional District
- Regional District of Kootenay Boundary

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