

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program offers more rebate options in 2023

DUNCAN, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is providing significantly more funding for a series of rebates to help residents invest in healthier and more efficient home heating options.

The Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program is funded by the BC Lung Association (BC Lung) and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV), providing financial assistance to help residents purchase healthier home-heating options to improve air quality in the Cowichan Valley. For 2023, the program includes 17.5% more funding for heat pumps, 31.5% more for pellet stoves, and 57% more for woodstove to woodstove exchanges. In addition to offering incentives for replacing wood-burning appliances with more efficient heat sources, the 2023 program offers a new incentive for removing old wood-burning appliances.

“With the cost of living increasing, it is important that we make healthier home heating options more accessible to ensure that this program benefits a wide range of residents,” said Aaron Stone, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “Improving air quality in the region remains a key priority for our organization, and we hope to see this funding program fully-subscribed in 2023.”

Exchange Initiative

The Wood-Burning Appliance Exchange Initiative offers financial incentives for replacing wood-burning appliances with more efficient and healthier home heating appliances. Residents looking to upgrade their home heating systems are eligible for rebates up to \$2,350, depending on the appliance type. In recognition of the emergency use of wood-burning for rural residents during power outages and intense cold weather events, the program now allows residents to keep their wood-burning appliances when applying for a heat pump rebate.

“Given the frequency and intensity of winter storms, residents in rural areas across our region have expressed concern if a heat pump were to be their only heat source,” said Leah Berscheid, Environmental Technologist at the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “We hope this modification to the program will encourage more residents to take advantage of the heat-pump rebate.”

Bounty Initiative

The CVRD is now offering a new incentive for residents to remove existing non-EPA or CSA-certified wood-burning appliances without requiring the installation of a new heating appliance. The \$300 one-time incentive is limited to one per household and only applies to installed, working-order appliances. To be eligible, residents are required to dismantle their old appliance before recycling it (free of charge) at a CVRD Recycling Centre.

Beyond accessibility, the benefits of the 2023 program are shared by individuals and the community in two distinct ways:

1. *Reducing Wood Smoke Pollution and Improving Community Health*

Transitioning to a more efficient home heating system reduces fine particulate matter released into the atmosphere from wood burning, and a single home can contribute to improved air quality for everyone in a neighbourhood.

“This is especially important due to the Cowichan Valley’s unique topography,” said Kate Miller, Manager of Environment Services for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “Living in a low-lying valley with surrounding mountains limits the amount of wind that is required to mix atmospheric air, which can cause smoke to persist for days.”

2. *Saving Time and Money*

While switching to a heat pump saves the time of hauling, chopping and stacking wood, upgrading to a new wood-burning appliance also has the benefits by capturing more heat and using less wood. Residents may also find a reduction in their annual home insurance bill when removing or upgrading wood-burning appliances. For additional information on how to get the most heat from your wood while creating as little smoke as possible, see the Fraser Basin Council’s [Tips for a Cleaner Burn video](#).

For more information about the CVRD Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program and how to apply, visit www.cvrld.ca/Woodstove. To learn more about stacking other home heating appliance rebates, visit [Better Homes BC](#) and the [Canada Greener Homes Grant](#) or contact a home energy coach for free at 1-844-881-9790.

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