

STAFF REPORT: Engineering and Public Works



REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: March 10, 2008
REPORT NO.: EPW.08.36
SUBJECT: Earth Hour Endorsement
**PREPARED BY: Jeffery Fletcher, Manager of Solid
Waste and Environmental Initiatives**

A. Recommendations

WHEREAS on Saturday March 29, 2008 starting at 8 p.m. individuals, businesses, municipalities and communities around the world are being requested to reduce electrical power usage for one hour, being “Earth Hour”;

AND WHEREAS the Town has committed to developing an action plan to reduce corporate and community greenhouse gas emissions and the proposed “Earth Hour” event will raise awareness and support for that cause in the local community;

AND WHEREAS the municipality will help promote the “Earth Hour” event locally by turning off non-essential lighting throughout the municipality and advertising the event in the local print media and on the Town’s web page;

THEREFORE Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains does hereby endorse participation in the global “Earth Hour” event to raise awareness and support for action on climate change and encourages all residents, businesses and groups to participate as well as outlined in Report EPW.08.36.

B. Background

Earth Hour began in Sydney Australia in 2007 and this year the event is going world wide. The purpose is to send a national and global message that global warming is a critical issue that everyone and all levels of government need to take action on. Local communities have an important role to play as change agents and leaders in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Blue Mountains has a goal of an absolute emissions reduction of 6% below 2005 levels – which translates into approximately 40,000 tonnes of eCO₂.

Over the next year the Town will be asking the community to get involved in developing a plan – an action plan that will include emission reduction and climate protection initiatives that could be implemented in and or by our Town.

This **Earth Hour event at 8pm on Saturday March 29th** will bring people, individuals businesses, and communities around the world together on the threat

of climate change. The event involves simply turning off the lights for one hour at 8pm on Saturday March 29th and turning off any other non-essential appliance or electronic device. The Town will ask everybody to participate including homeowners, retail stores, local industry and local institutions. Town departments will be looking at what non-essential lights and equipment can be shut down for the event.

The event will be advertised in the local news media for two weeks prior to the event.

The Municipality needs the community's help to realize our climate protection goals. So at 8pm on Saturday, March 29th the Town will power down for Earth Hour to show we care about the future of the planet.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

This activity will assist with Strategic Goal #3 "Preserving and enhancing natural and environmental features...of the community" and will also be part of Strategic Action 3.1 the "Green" strategy to "proactively protect air, water and land features and sites".

D. Budget Impact

Approximately \$400.00 of the Environmental Initiatives - Sustainability Operating Budget (1-465-5210) will be used to advertize and support this event.

E. Attached

1. World Wildlife Fund, Earth Hour brief.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffery Fletcher
Manager of Solid Waste and Environmental Initiatives

Reg Russwurm
Director of Engineering and Public Works