



FACT SHEET

GHG Emissions Reduction Targets

Bill 27 Target Requirements

Bill 27 requires that each Local Trust Committee (LTC) set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets in their official community plan (OCP). At least one of the targets must be a measurable and numerical emissions reduction target, expressed as a percentage reduction in GHGs. These targets are intended to be challenging and motivating – to inspire community action, rather than be easily achieved.

What reductions are required to avoid the worst effects of climate change?

What is a 'safe' concentration of GHGs in the Earth's atmosphere? Scientific modeling by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicates that temperature increases of more than 2-3° C will result in 'dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.' In order to avoid this, the atmospheric level of CO₂ must remain below 440 parts per million (ppm). Studies by other leading climate scientists show that warming over 1.7° C will result in species extinction and ice sheet melting – indicating that 350ppm is the upper limit of 'safe' CO₂. In 2008, atmospheric levels of CO₂ already measured 385 ppm – well above this 'safe' limit.

What emissions reductions are required to achieve this 'safe' level of GHGs? According to the IPCC, GHG emissions reductions of 50-85% below 2000 levels are required by 2050 to achieve a CO₂ concentration of 350-450 ppm. According to this scenario, this reduction will result in global average temperature increase of 2 - 2.4° C above pre-industrial levels and an average global rise in sea level of 0.4 to 1.4 m – excluding contributions from melting ice sheets, glaciers, and ice caps. As this study does not account for all possible feedback loops between the carbon cycle and temperature increases, it is likely that the reductions required to achieve 350ppm are underestimated.

What targets has the Province adopted?

In 2008, the BC government committed to a 33% reduction in provincial GHG emissions from 2007 levels by the year 2020, and an 80% reduction from 2007 levels by the year 2050. Interim targets of 6% by 2012 and 18% by 2016 have also been adopted.

What targets have other local governments adopted?

Many local governments in BC have already set targets. Below is a sampling of these targets:

Bowen Island Municipality: 33% by the year 2020 and 80% by the year 2050 (2007 baseline)

Metro Vancouver: 15% reduction by 2015 and a 33% reduction by 2020 below 2007 levels

CRD: 33% reduction in emissions by 2020 (below 2007 levels)

Comox Valley Regional District: 80% by 2050

City of Colwood: 33% by 2020, relative to 2007 levels

Dawson Creek: 14% by 2012, 33% by 2020, and 85% by 2050

