



PRESIDENT

M. Asmuss, MCEd., B.A. Hon.

VICE PRESIDENT

R.A. Halliday, P.Eng.

TREASURER

R. Lepage, CPA, CMC, C.Dir.

DIRECTORS

H. Carlson, MPP, B.Sc.

J. Hanson

A. Lindgren, M.E.S., B.A. Hon.

L. Luciuk, B.A. & Sc.

P. Prebble, M. SEM, M.Ed., BBA

L. Salm, J.D., B.A.

B. Weichel, M.Sc.

G. Wright, J.D., M.Sc., B.Sc., P.Eng.

S. Valentine, B.Sc. Hon.,
M.D. Candidate

TELEPHONE

1.306.665.1915

EMAIL

info@environmentalsociety.ca

WEBSITE

www.environmentalsociety.ca

MAIL

PO Box 1372 Saskatoon SK S7K 3N9

OFFICE

220 20th Street West Saskatoon

June 5, 2023

Prince Albert City Hall
1084 Central Avenue
Prince Albert SK S6V 7P3

Dear Mayor Dionne and Prince Albert City Council,

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES) applauds the City of Prince Albert for passing a motion to achieve net-zero emissions from its operations by 2030. The leadership demonstrated by the City of Prince Albert to achieve net zero by 2030 is needed in Saskatchewan and the SES is pleased that Mayor Dionne had the courage to propose this important goal.

We are living in a time of great change, and this makes people uneasy. Our carbon-intensive way of life and the climatic changes that it is producing are both a challenge and an opportunity. Public opinion polls in Canada show that demand for climate action is on the rise, that people recognize the importance of clean energy, but also that people support expanding oil and gas. However, climate scientists assert that fossil fuels need to be phased out worldwide over the next 25 to 30 years if we want to protect our quality of life. It is important that the City of Prince Albert (the "City") helps to show the causes of climate change and a path forward, creating a sense of momentum, while addressing affordability.

The SES looks forward to details surrounding the City's plans to achieve its net zero goals. If it has not already been done, SES suggests that the City conduct a review of its current sources of GHG emissions and use this to focus its GHG reduction activities. SES knows that the pathway generally involves reducing our impacts, replacing polluting energy systems with clean energy, and reconciling our relationships with each other and nature. As stated previously, these changes can be difficult to understand and implement, so it is important that public education and engagement is pursued to help win hearts and minds.

As stated in the latest IPCC report:¹

Net zero CO₂ energy systems entail: **a substantial reduction in overall fossil fuel use**, minimal use of unabated fossil fuels, and use of carbon capture and storage in the remaining fossil fuel systems; electricity systems that emit no net CO₂; **widespread electrification**; alternative energy carriers in applications less amenable to electrification; **energy conservation and efficiency**; and greater integration across the energy system.
[emphasis added]

¹ SYNTHESIS REPORT OF THE IPCC SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT, online:
https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syр/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf



SES is pleased that the City has recognized the importance of electrification and energy efficiency as demonstrated by the upgrade of lighting to LEDs and the recent purchase of electric ice resurfacing equipment. These actions help residents see solutions being implemented and are important to help promote “solutions literacy” among the public.

SES does note that the net zero motion specifically called out actions “such as tree planting and/or employing technologies that can capture carbon before it is released into the air.” SES would like to suggest caution to the City in this regard. While it is true that there are numerous benefits to planting trees, governments need to be careful about targets based on net accounting that may undermine mitigation action. The primary focus should be on reducing emissions via energy efficiency, eliminating waste, and fuel switching away from carbon intensive fossil fuels. As the City is closely connected to the forestry industries, we would encourage council to The Land Gap Report of 2022 which helps explain why governments’ over reliance on carbon removals could prove problematic.²

Climate change is caused by human activities that burn fossil fuels like gas, oil and coal and release carbon pollution into the air which traps the sun’s heat. To slow climate change, we must stop polluting. The main solution is to use clean electricity and become more energy aware and efficient. The City can create a sense of momentum by electrifying its operations and by encouraging residents and businesses to electrify their homes, vehicles, and companies.

Thank you for leading the City to embark on the pathway to net zero by 2030. It is important to emphasize that every reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will make a difference to the future of human civilization. Every one-tenth of a degree rise in global average temperature that can be prevented will make a positive difference to the next generation. We owe it to our children and grandchildren and all future generations to do everything we can over the next decade to address the climate emergency and to set the stage for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

If there is interest, SES would be willing to meet with representatives of the City and/or to put them in contact with other municipalities and/or organizations that are working on municipal climate action. We look forward to seeing further details outlining the pathway to net zero for the City of Prince Albert.

Sincerely,

Margret Asmuss, President

Peter Prebble, Board Member

Bob Halliday, Vice President

Glenn Wright, Board Member

² Dooley K., et al, *The Land Gap Report*, Available at: <https://www.landgap.org/>