

To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Erfan Ahmed

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Subject: Proposal for reducing household waste and carbon emissions in promoting a sustainable lifestyle in Metro Vancouver.

## **Introduction**

The prevalence of increased climate change around the globe has played a significant role in contributing problems related to household waste and carbon emissions. In order to combat the issues relating to this, it is crucial to start by implementing changes in our lifestyle. Vancouver is known to be one of the eco-friendliest cities in Canada and implementing initiatives in the daily life such as the use of transit and cycling which provides an alternative to other forms of transportation. Furthermore, reducing household waste and using reusable items can act as a viable solution to overcome this area of concern.

## **Statement of Problem**

According to the Government of British Columbia, the total greenhouse gas emissions in 2017 in the province were 64.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent which reflects a 1.2% increase in emissions since 2016. Furthermore, mass waste of food on a large-scale level has shown to decompose and release methane gas into the atmosphere. Food waste and loss creates 3.3 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions which contributes to our current climate issues that occur on a global scale. In addition, all of the resources that have been used to produce food are also wasted. Therefore, by reducing food waste, we can also reduce the amount of resources lost in its production, processing and distribution. Moreover, providing subsidized transportation alternatives such as the use of transit at a lower cost will allow residents to minimize the use of personal vehicles on the road, especially during peak hours on weekdays. In addition, metro Vancouver has seen a 23 per cent increase in vehicle traffic crossing on the Port Mann Bridge which has led up from 132,000 per day in 2017 to 150,100 after the removal of the tolling system.

## **Proposed Solution**

A possible solution to this issue is to focus more on strategic actions in the daily life such as buying only what is needed, eliminating plastic bags and bringing reusable tote bags, picking ugly fruits and vegetables at smaller supermarkets, recycling efficiently and using leftover food for meals instead of making it go to waste. All of this can be achieved if the City of Vancouver counsellors introduce a smart solution to recycling that will allow residents to engage and take an active role through a rewards system that tracks household waste and promotes the reuse of items. In addition, Vancouver will have to work with the surrounding tri-cities to find a viable solution to re-implement tolls on the Port Mann bridge during peak hours to encourage residents to take transit to work and school, and therefore aid in reducing carbon emissions.

## Scope

To assess the feasibility of combating household waste and reducing carbon emissions, I will be analyzing the following questions in further detail:

1. What can be done in our daily lives to combat the issues pertained to wasting?
2. How can the city of Vancouver implement a better efficient recycling program to minimize waste?
3. How can the city of Vancouver implement advancing technological innovations that can contribute to a part of this problem?
4. How will a reintroduction of a tolling system on the Port Mann bridge impact traffic within the region?

## Methods

The primary source for this report will include surveys and questionnaires with commuters in the Vancouver lower mainland to see what the average time and distance is spent per day in commuting from home to work or school, and the modes of transportation that is taken. The secondary sources will include analyzing publications on wasting and climate change, as well as finding solutions that will be realistic in the long term.

## My Qualifications

I am currently expected to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology later this year. I have recently worked for a global climate change campaign with the British Columbia Federation of Students. Furthermore, my experience with global climate campaigning has demonstrated my interest in this rising issue that will benefit my research to further public awareness on this topic. My professional experience includes working in the public sector with the Government of British Columbia.

## Conclusion

It is evident that the rising problems associated with wasting and carbon emission plays a key role in the acceleration of some of the world's largest social challenges. With your approval, I will begin analyzing this issue across various contexts to find the best possible solution to reduce wasting in our daily lives, and how everybody in society can take an active role in reducing one's carbon footprint.

## References:

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