


Item No. 11.2.1 (ii)
Halifax Regional Council
February 25, 2014

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original signed by 

Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 11, 2014

SUBJECT: Earth Hour 2014

ORIGIN

Motion of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee of February 6, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order No. 1, Section 48 “Council shall not vote on a motion arising out of a presentation or an item added to the agenda until a staff report and recommendation is received from the Chief Administrative Officer in respect to the subject of the motion...”

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council support the recommendations of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee by:

1. Participating in Earth Hour by directing staff to turn off the lights of municipal buildings, where possible, on March 29, 2014, at 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.;
2. Promoting participation in Earth Hour through HRM’s networks and social media platforms;
3. Participating in the conversation around climate change during David Miller’s Speaking Tour; and
4. Requesting a staff report to consider the costs and implications of participating in Earth Hour City Challenge 2015.

BACKGROUND

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Canada gave a presentation to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee on February 6, 2014.

DISCUSSION

For half a century, WWF has worked to protect the future of nature. WWF is Canada's largest international conservation organization with the active support of more than 150,000 Canadians. They connect the power of a strong global network to on-the-ground conservation efforts across Canada, with offices in Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, St. John's, Iqaluit and Inuvik. Their Mission: To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable;
- Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption; and
- conserving the world's biological diversity.

HRM has participated in Earth Hour since 2009. This year Earth Hour is between 8:30 and 9:30pm local time on March 29, 2014. Earth Hour is a grassroots initiative that began 8 years ago as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, and has since expanded to more than 7000 cities and towns worldwide. Earth Hour encourages individuals, businesses and communities to turn off non-essential lights for one hour as a visual symbolic act showing their commitment to the planet and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications outside of the current operating budget for the recommendations put forward by the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee for HRM's participation in Earth Hour 2014.

Any financial implications in regard to HRM's participation in Earth Hour City Challenge 2015 will be provided in a subsequent staff report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HRM will engage the community to promote awareness and participation in Earth Hour 2014 by promoting the event through its network and social media platforms. HRM will lead by example by turning off some non-essential municipal lights during Earth Hour 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

HRM's participation in Earth Hour 2014 will reduce electricity usage during the hour, resulting in cost savings and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions during the hour. Therefore, participation has a positive environmental impact.

ALTERNATIVES

None provided

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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