

## **GROWING THE FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY ONE TOWN AT A TIME!**

*Here we share the story of our two-month campaign in Toronto. We recognize this model will need to be adapted to your local circumstances. Every campaign will be different.*

**By Lyn Adamson, lyn@climatefast.ca**

The largest city in Canada just endorsed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty! Woo-hoo! The city manager is tasked with writing the federal government calling on them to endorse the treaty initiative and initiate global negotiations to enact a legislated end to fossil fuels. You can see the terms of the treaty here: <https://fossilfuel treaty.org> and you can sign up as an individual, endorse as a group, or do as we did and take it to your town or city council and have them add to the growing pressure on Ottawa to change course and really enact the just transition. (Quick 5 min [video intro](#) to treaty)

So what are the tips we have to offer?

**First be inspired by the vision.** To stop fighting projects one at a time and to turn the corner on the fossil fuel age globally we need to work together for a managed decline. First step is no new fossil fuel projects (no permits) and no more subsidies. Since fossil fuels aren't mentioned in the Paris accord we need a new global treaty to wind them down.

**Next: bring on a few key ally groups**, so you know you'll be able to ramp up the action and pressure on council as you get closer to a vote. We made a list of potential allies including local environmental groups plus labour, health professionals and faith communities. We formed a planning group.

Develop your plan and timing to work with your council's process. We found out that 'members motions' go straight to a vote, and don't have to go through a committee in advance. To match our desired timing that's the approach we took. We needed 2 councillors, a mover and seconder, and together they submitted a motion a week in advance of the last council meeting in the summer.

**We met with Mike Layton and developed the following plan based on the advice he gave us to have the best chance for a successful vote.**

- 1) Get key councillors on board** – i.e., those from the middle of council, rather than one end of the spectrum, in our case we needed the chair of the Infrastructure and Environment; for us it was a suburban councillor who cares deeply about the environment; we held our next lobby meeting with her. That was June 11.
- 2) Have a strategy to get the Mayor on board**  
Meet with the Mayor: *well, we never did meet with the Mayor.* But he heard a lot about the campaign; we put our request for a meeting in to him very early on in a carefully written letter, with a brief on the treaty initiative attached, along with a list of the Toronto groups already endorsing the treaty. We also invited him to our launch on June 14.

- 3) **Hold a high energy [launch](#) to get momentum going** Ours was one month before the vote. Every high profile guest we invited to the launch said yes! We had a fabulous program which you can watch here. Councillor Christine Boyle of Vancouver spoke and urged us all to bring Toronto on too!
- 4) **Generate a lot of letters to the Mayor and Councillors**, especially your local councillors. Your politicians want to feel supported when they take a bold step so let them know this is what their constituents want, by engaging constituents directly.
- 5) **Provide support materials for the letter writing campaign**, provide a model letter and pitch the need for letters to mailing lists of all the supporting groups. At the launch we told people we'd need them to write their councillors, to meet with their councillors, and we wrote up a sample letter. So following the meeting we posted online and in an email We didn't have an auto tool, so it was a cut, paste, modify text, find and enter the email address, the cc to the mayor and bcc to Climatefast. We had people in pretty much every one of the 25 wards write their councillor – and cc the Mayor, so the Mayor was getting a steady stream of letters.
- 6) **Lobby individual councillors** by setting up meetings when possible. We had some very profound experiences by bringing small groups of people who cared greatly, and especially including youth in our delegations.
- 7) **Getting support letters to address health (doctors) science and labour or community and faith groups.** Address to the Mayor and all the councillors.
- 8) **Get an op ed printed in a major paper** so the politicians will see it. *We never did succeed in this -and still we won our vote!*
- 9) **Optional: set up a change.org petition** In Toronto city council receives petitions at the start of the council meeting; not as important as letters but a nice supplement if you have the energy – and there's a way to present publicly.
- 10) **Be ready to pitch to media and to follow up with social media, with supporters, with councillors, after the win.** We could have used more help with media outreach. We received virtually nil mainstream media coverage which really surprised us. Apparently phoning along with sending out your release is recommended, so you'll need a good list and volunteers, and if possible someone with media experience.

**Nearly 200 people signed up for the [virtual launch](#)** with about 2 weeks of really promoting as widely as we could through all the interested groups. ***We had a stellar list of presenters!*** This generated a lot of momentum for the campaign.

**We got lots of support from the International Campaign team!**

We would be very happy to meet with those of you who want to bring this campaign to your community. Vancouver Councillor Christine Boyle, campaign chair Tzeporah Berman and international campaign cities organizer Seble Samuel helped us think about how to pitch the treaty to councillors.

Here are a couple of key talking points

- 1) No matter how much good work we do locally to lower emissions the temperature is still going to rise and devastation will come to our communities – if we don't get other communities on board to reduce emissions, and get the central government to stop permitting and subsidizing fossil fuels.
- 2) The money going into the economy of the past is being wasted and is contributing to making the climate crisis worse: we need those dollars to invest in cities in taking action that really will reduce emissions much more rapidly than is currently happening.

AND HERE'S THE RESULT!

<https://climatefast.ca/blogs/we-made-history-toronto-city-council-endorses-call-fossil-fuel-treaty>

ARTICLES: (published by the Energy Mix)

[Op Ed](#): Toronto Councillors can help wind down fossil fuel proliferation

[Historic Win](#): Toronto endorsed Fossil Non-Proliferation Treaty