



PRESS RELEASE

NEW REPORT OUTLINES POLICIES NEEDED TO HELP RELIEVE HIGH ENERGY COSTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES

MARCH 9 2020, Vancouver, BC – There are over 270,000 households in British Columbia facing energy poverty, which is defined as a lack of affordable access to the basic energy services that contribute to quality of life. Rural, remote, and Indigenous communities in the province are being hit particularly hard, with some communities spending up to three times the provincial average to heat their homes.

A report released today by Ecotrust Canada explores a number of drivers of energy poverty in British Columbia, and identifies where policies and programs can be improved to better support communities pursuing resilient, clean, and affordable energy systems. The report lays out five key recommendations for governments, utilities, and financial institutions.

Many energy consumers in the province are reliant on fuels and technologies that are increasingly outdated, costly, and vulnerable to a changing climate. The products and resources needed to address these issues are becoming increasingly available. However, to ensure that all B.C. communities have affordable, safe, and equitable access to energy, deeper collaboration and increased ambition will be necessary across all sectors.

Dylan Heerema, Senior Analyst & Researcher at Ecotrust Canada: *“Rural customers in B.C. are paying up to three times the provincial average to heat their homes. We need to see a renewed commitment from government and utilities to help support those that are struggling to pay their utility bills.”*

“Our experience has shown that technologies like air-source heat pumps can help to reduce energy costs in many communities. We hope to see expanded programs for homeowners in rural areas looking to switch to these low-carbon, affordable heating systems.”

View the report here: [Moving toward energy security in BC's rural, remote and Indigenous communities](#)

About Ecotrust Canada

Ecotrust Canada is an enterprising charity that works with rural, remote, and Indigenous communities toward building an economy that provides for a healthy and resilient natural environment; sustainable and abundant energy, food, and housing; prosperous and meaningful livelihoods; and vibrant and inclusive cultures. We call this approach building an economy that provides for life. Our on-the-ground work and systems approach is entrepreneurial, partnership-based and relentlessly practical. ecotrust.ca

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