



PRESS RELEASE

EXPANDED HEAT PUMP PROGRAM PROVIDES TRANSFORMATIVE NEW FUNDING FOR ENERGY AFFORDABILITY IN BC

May 13, 2024, Xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, BC – Ecotrust Canada celebrates the BC and federal government’s new commitment to improving affordability for lower and middle-income households in BC. **Today’s announcement** of up to \$24,000 in cost coverage for energy-saving heat pumps and electricity upgrades provides transformative new funding for households across BC struggling with unaffordable energy bills, extreme heat and cold, and rising costs of home energy retrofits. Ecotrust Canada has been **calling for strengthening this program** since June 2023, alongside 23 aligned organizations and First Nations.

This new investment reflects a major down payment on the resources needed to tackle energy insecurity and realize energy justice in BC. An estimated 200,000 households in BC face energy insecurity — a lack of affordable access to basic energy services. With today’s announcement, \$254 million in new funding will support an estimated 16,000 lower and middle-income households to replace gas, oil, or propane furnaces with high-efficiency heat pumps.

We are encouraged that this expanded program will adopt an equity-based approach that provides the deepest support to the households that need it most. In addition to reduced energy costs, heat pumps provide active cooling and improved ventilation — enabling people to shield themselves from the worst effects of wildfire smoke and extreme heat. This targeted investment will improve affordability, safety, and comfort for vulnerable BC households.

In addition to the increase in funding support, the new collaborative approach will simplify the process for BC households to obtain funding. British Columbians will now only need to apply to the combined provincial program instead of submitting separate applications to each level of government. We are hopeful that this streamlined approach will provide a smoother experience for households pursuing upgrades.

The new funding announced today will help thousands of BC households using fossil fuels improve affordability, safety, and comfort by switching to a heat pump. We encourage the province to build on this success by also strengthening support for households transitioning from inefficient electric heating, such as baseboard radiators. These households often face exorbitant energy bills and remain vulnerable to health and safety risks in a changing climate.

Graham Anderson, Director, Community Energy at Ecotrust Canada: *“Energy efficiency retrofits are the only lasting solution to high energy bills and extreme heat in homes. We are thrilled to see the BC Government step up its incentive to more completely cover the cost of a heat pump for many lower-income British Columbians. This transformative program will make it possible for thousands of households to enjoy safer, more comfortable, and more affordable homes.”*



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

For more information:

Shannon Lough – Communications Manager, Ecotrust Canada
T: 250-624-4191 | shannon@ecotrust.ca