

For Information

DATE: February 23, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **PARTICIPATION IN EARTH HOUR CAMPAIGN 2011**

FROM: R. Kent Gillespie, Commissioner of Employee and Business Services

OBJECTIVE

To inform Council regarding the Region of Peel annual participation in Earth Hour.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Earth Hour 2011 is an international initiative of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), where participants will switch off their lights for a dedicated hour on Saturday, March 26th from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- In 2010, 1.3 billion people in 128 countries worldwide switched off their lights for Earth Hour, making it the largest voluntary action ever witnessed.
- Approved Regional facilities will turn off all non-essential lights on March 26th from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

DISCUSSION**1. Background**

Earth Hour 2011 represents the fifth annual event initiated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Australia and Fairfax Media. Earth Hour was created to educate and engage the community in fighting human-caused climate change. Last year over 10 million Canadians took part in all provinces and territories, turning out the lights in over 300 cities and towns. Earth Hour demonstrates how individuals can work together to fight climate change and turning off the lights for one hour provides a highly visible action that is easy for most people to partake in.

a) Peel's Participation in Earth Hour 2011

The Cities of Mississauga and Brampton and the Town of Caledon have all confirmed that they will be participating in Earth Hour 2011. By participating in this campaign, the Region of Peel can show its support for the area municipalities while also demonstrating its leadership in the fields of energy conservation and environmental stewardship.

It is proposed that Regional facilities participate in Earth Hour only where there is no safety risk to the community or to Regional staff. On March 26th, between 8:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m, all Region of Peel facilities that can do so safely will turn off all non-essential lights. Facilities that function on a 24/7 basis will ensure that the safety of building

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occupants remains top priority. Operational issues that may restrict participation in Earth Hour will be addressed on a per facility basis and all necessary safety measures will be taken beforehand.

The symbolic action of turning off the lights within Regional facilities will send a clear message to the community about Peel's environmental commitment. In addition, public promotion of Peel's participation in Earth Hour may also encourage more local businesses and residents to become involved.

2. Proposed Direction

It is proposed that the Region of Peel participate in Earth Hour at facilities where involvement poses no risk to safety and does not disadvantage any services required at Regionally owned or leased facilities. Within these limits, Region of Peel facility operators will commit to turning off all lights, other than essential security lighting, for the one hour period between 8:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. on March 26th.

a) Marketing and Communication

Peel's participation in Earth Hour 2011 will provide an opportunity to encourage local businesses and residents to participate in the one hour lights-out initiative. Residents and businesses can currently sign-up to participate and learn more about the campaign at www.earthhour.org.

i) Internal

Information will be made available to inform all staff of Peel Region's participation in Earth Hour. This material will include information about the campaign/Peel's participation, and will also encourage staff to join in. Potential mediums include the Region of Peel's internal website, e-mail communications and marketing materials to be displayed in highly trafficked areas such as building lobbies and lunch rooms.

A clear understanding of the requirements of facility operators within Peel must be established to ensure the safety of all building occupants during Earth Hour. Facility operators will be encouraged to promote the event within their building and to provide further information for residents and/or occupants.

In collaboration with local distribution companies, the Region of Peel will measure the amount of kilowatt hours saved during the one hour lights-out period for the geographic area of Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon. A follow up report will then be provided to Regional Council outlining the amount of electricity and carbon emissions saved.

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PARTICIPATION IN EARTH HOUR CAMPAIGN 2011**ii) External**

Information will be made available to inform the local community of Peel Region's participation in Earth Hour. This material will include information about the campaign/Peel's participation, and will also encourage others from the community to join in. Potential mediums include the Region of Peel's external website and mobile signs, local newspapers, social media, and marketing materials to be displayed in publicly accessible areas such as the lobbies of some Regional facilities. The Region of Peel will also make efforts to collaborate with the area municipalities for outreach initiatives wherever possible.



R. Kent Gillespie
Commissioner of Employee
and Business Services

Approved for Submission:

D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Steve Hall at extension 4207 or via email at steven.hall@peelregion.ca

c. Legislative Services