

New Federal funding will help municipalities address climate change



A Federal infusion of \$530 million will help municipalities address and adapt to climate change.

The money will go to the Green Municipal Fund, spearheaded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to further the fund's work to help towns and cities across Canada adapt to the new normal.

The investment was recently celebrated by Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leah Taylor Roy and representatives from the Town of Aurora and the City of Richmond Hill, in Oak Ridges.

Here, MP Taylor Roy said the investment will help fund approximately 1,400 projects at the community level honed in on adaptation projects, with a particular focus on inclusion and equity.

There are so many different programs that will come under this, but we know that our communities require infrastructure to support healthy, affordable living and ensure the safety of our homes right now and businesses, said Taylor Roy. We need more resilient roads, bridges, water treatment facilities. We need to restore wetlands, we need to have green roofs, we need to do a lot of things that will help us adapt to climate change, but we're not stopping the fight against climate change. Mitigation is probably more important, but for our day-to-day lives, adaptation is essential and that's why this fund is so exciting.

The Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiatives is going to provide funding and skills to support local governments to adapt and build long-term resiliency to the impact of climate change.

The funding, she added, is not limited to municipalities but towns and cities can also work with organizations such as non-profits to address these climate change-related goals.

Representing Aurora at the announcement, Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese said there is significant interest in this funding at the municipal level.

We really believe in thinking globally but acting locally because that is the only way climate is going to be reversed from the pathway it is going right now. I can tell you that for residents in Aurora, our staff, and all of our representatives, we believe in that 100 per cent, he said. We have an Environmental Advisory Committee that meets regularly from a residents' standpoint that feeds information into our planning department. We also have an Energy Conservation and Management Demand plan that were working on to try and become Net Zero. We're looking at every single thing in our community where we can save energy and we also have a lot of pressures [related] related to the development and development pressures are encroaching. We're very serious about trying to control the adequate and sustainable development that we have, but maintain the natural heritage that we also enjoy.

An investment in this fund is just the latest environmental measure spearheaded by the Federal government, said the MP. Such

initiatives include the Federal Nature Accountability Bill, programs to halt and reverse a biodiversity loss across the country, and conserving land ?about half the size of Manitoba.?

?We know protecting nature is core to everything we do in trying to fight climate change, mitigate and adapt climate change, and it is the foundation of our economy and our health,? she said. ?The science is clear: nature needs more protection.

?When you look at the amount of land and water that was protected under previous governments?we're making great strides to ensure that our future is going to be one where we really focus on protecting our environment and the adaptation is necessary now, the mitigation, but the hope is that we will get to a place where we will be more in balance as we continue to work forward.?

By Brock Weir