

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

June 9, 2006

Re: This week was Environment Week, Be Our Guest column, June 9.

I was a bit puzzled by Bob Groeneveld's column in the Chilliwack Times on Friday.

He claimed the 10 tips we published during Environment Week for individuals did not include anything about improving air quality. I'm not sure if he actually read the list because the No. 1 tip urged people to bike to work, car pool, use mass transit, or walk.

Our No. 2 tip included advice on how to reduce your car's fuel consumption, which would also help improve air quality. After all, the single biggest source of air pollution in the Lower Mainland is from motor vehicles.

Our lengthy but successful fight against the Sumas Energy 2 Power plant was all about protecting air quality. The B.C. government spent \$1.5 million and worked together with Fraser Valley MLAs, MPs, mayors and citizens to stop the project. This victory means another 2.5 tons of air pollution won't be pumped into our airshed every day.

Some of our other environmental initiatives to improve air quality include funding for the \$1.9 billion RAV Rapid Transit Line (Canada Line) to take 200,000 cars off Lower Mainland roads, tax breaks for alternative fuels and up to \$2,000 (PST exemption) for those who buy cleaner and more fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles.

I purchased a hybrid vehicle last year for my own use. It's a small step, but it's one of many things we can do as individuals to protect our environment.

The list we produced for Environment Week shows how we can all do little things that in the long run contribute to a better environment. It's not always about government – people can make a difference too.

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment