



Waste

Fossil fuels are used to manufacture, transport, and ultimately dispose of all the goods we consume, and when waste is disposed in a landfill it produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas. The actions we take in this region have a significant influence on the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions related to the goods consumed in the region.

Much of our waste can be reduced, reused, or recycled, so we need to ensure that waste is always considered a potential resource. Transitioning to a circular economy helps to further reduce waste (and associated emissions), because the circular economy concept aims to retain the value of products, materials, and resources in the economy through non-linear business models, maximized product lifespans, and closed production and consumption loops. For example, preventing methane emissions through source reduction, composting, or capturing methane at digestion facilities and landfills are effective greenhouse gas reduction strategies. The captured gas can be upgraded to renewable natural gas, and used to replace fossil-based natural gas (see also Energy Issue Area). Policies incentivizing or requiring the reuse, recycling, and recovery of energy from waste materials can generate new business and create new economic opportunities.

CONSUMPTION-BASED EMISSIONS INVENTORY

Metro Vancouver has been preparing sector-based emissions inventories (as described above) since 1985. But sector-based inventories only account for emissions that are released directly in the region, mostly related to fossil fuel use for transportation and building heat. They don't account for the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions associated with the goods and services consumed in the region, because they are not emitted directly in the region. A consumption-based inventory attributes the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the full lifecycle of goods and services including emissions from the production, transport, wholesale and retail, use, and disposal.

Since greenhouse gases have the same impact on the global climate regardless of where they are emitted into the atmosphere, Metro Vancouver will explore conducting a consumption based inventory to measure the full emissions impact of choices made in the region. Evaluated together, these different inventory approaches can provide a more complete picture of the region's greenhouse gas emissions and offer insights into the most effective actions to reduce global emissions.

