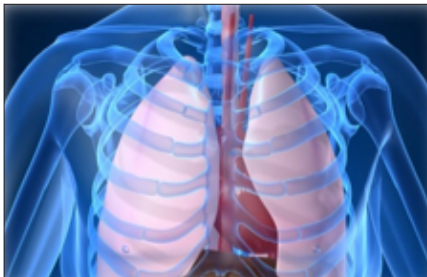


# WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT VISUAL AIR QUALITY?

Hazy views can impact our communities, economy and environment in several ways.

## OUR COMMUNITIES

The same “fine particulate matter” that impacts visual air quality can also affect human health. In the short term it can trigger illness such as asthma attacks, and heart and lung problems. Over the long term it can harden arteries and increase cancer risk. Infants, the elderly and people with diabetes, lung or heart disease are particularly susceptible to health effects from fine particulate matter.



Poor visual air quality can affect the well-being of residents, as well as their ability to meet spiritual needs and participate in cultural events. Visual air quality is important to local First Nations peoples because they need to see the mountains, see from the mountains, and be seen by their mountain mother.<sup>2</sup>

With or without health improvements, recent surveys have shown that local residents are willing to pay for better visual air quality.

## OUR ECONOMY

According to a recent paper by the British Columbia Visibility Coordinating Committee, improving visual air quality in the Lower Fraser Valley will benefit our economy.<sup>3</sup>

Tourists may shorten their stay, go elsewhere, not return and discourage friends and family from visiting after experiencing poor visual air quality. Economists estimate that the local tourism industry could lose approximately \$55 million per year in future revenues if visual air quality remains an issue.



When it settles on plant surfaces, fine particulate matter can disrupt plant growth, delay flowering time, reduce the number and area of leaves, and reduce fruit production. Local farmers could increase revenues by an estimated \$5 million per year if visual air quality improves.

Costs of health care and damage to well-being could add up to \$412 million per year if we allow visual air quality to deteriorate by 10% in the Lower Fraser Valley.

Hazy views may increase costs for the local film industry.

Home buyers will pay more for homes with clear views, so the real estate industry stands to benefit from better visual air quality.

## OUR ENVIRONMENT

Fine particulate matter can affect our environment by damaging vegetation and acidifying soil and surface water, ultimately impacting the health of our local ecosystems. Hazy skies also reduce the amount of sunlight reaching the earth which can impact climate and ecological systems.



By reducing emissions of the air pollutants that impact visual air quality, residents and visitors alike will enjoy better health, a more robust economy and clearer views of the region's magnificent scenery.

<sup>2</sup> Mountains that See, and that Need to Be Seen: Aboriginal Perspectives on Degraded Visibility Associated with Air Pollution in the BC Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. Keith Thor Carlson, May 2009.

<sup>3</sup> The Economic Benefits of Improving Visual Air Quality in British Columbia's Lower Fraser Valley: A Discussion Paper by the British Columbia Visibility Coordinating Committee, May 2014.