

Promising Practices



Businesses

Bullfrog Power sells renewable energy to businesses, individuals

Many of us are familiar with bold advertising strategies that emphasize the idea that although something might initially be unpleasant, in the long run it is the best medicine. Think of the memorable Buckley's cough syrup ad campaign with the tagline: "It tastes awful. And it works." Similarly, in March and April 2009, Bullfrog Power used the gallant strategy in the form of TV, radio and online advertisements, as well as posters in bus shelters, telling us to "pay more for energy."¹



According to Bullfrog Power, the purpose of the campaign was twofold. First, the campaign was intended to promote discussion regarding the fact that consumers are paying an artificially reduced price on electricity—i.e. prices should include the environmental and health costs associated with using fossil fuels to generate electricity. In other words, energy prices need to go up in order to reduce consumption, increase conservation and ensure irreversible climate change is prevented. The second purpose of Bullfrog's campaign was to educate the public on the benefits of renewable energy—such as the fact that it leads to cleaner air and sustainability—thus making it worthwhile to pay more for.²

Putting a price on carbon

This notion of putting a price on carbon, according to experts, is a positive and efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Dr. Mark Jaccard, professor at the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser

University, argues that "[i]n addition to helping us achieve GHG emissions reductions, paying more to reflect the cost of carbon to society can also lead to increased investment, innovation, and job creation in Canada's growing green sector—resulting in a win-win situation."³

Bullfrog ensures that its generators inject 100 per cent green electricity (from certified wind and hydro facilities) onto electricity grids and 100 per cent green natural gas (from decaying organic matter in landfills meeting strict ICF International standards) into pipelines to match the amount used in its clients' home or business.⁴ To ensure that Bullfrog's energy is not double counted, a certificate is produced to account for the energy generated by Bullfrog. Once a company purchases offsets, the certificates are retired.⁵ Bullfrog says the cost for homeowners to offset both electricity and natural gas generally amounts to less than \$2 a day. Bullfrog powered electricity costs 3¢ per kWh and natural gas costs 13.3 ¢ per m³.⁶

What is green natural gas?

Green Natural Gas is derived from the decomposition of organic waste which releases carbon into the atmosphere. Bullfrog Power harnesses this gas and injects it into gas pipelines. Ultimately, carbon dioxide is released back into the atmosphere; however, the decomposition process always leads to this release, so using the gas as fuel first is considered to be a net-zero carbon process. Furthermore, the carbon released is the carbon needed for the plant life cycle, meaning it does not damage the atmosphere. Best of all, this green gas is, unlike conventional natural gas, renewable, seeing as it comes from organic waste. By adding green natural gas into pipelines, Bullfrog Power and the companies who support it are reducing Canada's dependence on conventional natural gas.⁷

Willing to pay more

Clearly, Bullfrog Power's message has been heard loud and clear. Businesses, environmental non-governmental organizations, and individuals alike have been purchasing Bullfrog Power in order to promote and support green energy. Unilever Canada chose to Bullfrog power all of its manufacturing facilities and offices in Ontario, making Unilever Canada's largest green energy purchaser. It is estimated that Unilever will purchase 59,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy annually, enough to power 6,000 homes.⁸

Bullfrog Power has over 8,000 residential customers and over 1,300 commercial customers.⁹ Commercial customers are recognized on Bullfrog's website in categories from advocate (purchasing 1-99 MWh of green energy) to visionary (purchasing over 50,000 MWh of energy from Bullfrog).

Audits

When it was founded in 2005, Bullfrog Power realized it was important that the company be held accountable for the green energy it sells so that customers would know that their money was going to a good cause. Therefore, it has committed to being audited on an annual basis, and the audits—which are available on Bullfrog's website—indicate that 100% of the certificates sold were matched with the production of renewable energy.¹⁰

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