



November 14, 2025

Hon. George Anderson
MLA, Nanaimo-Lantzville
George.Anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca

RE: Support for Bill M 216 – Professional Reliance Act

Dear Mr. Anderson,

On behalf of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade (GVBOT) and the Urban Development Institute (UDI), we wish to express our support for the intent of *Bill M 216 – Professional Reliance Act*.

This proposed legislation will help address a major concern of the development community by recognizing the importance of improving the efficiency and predictability of the development approvals process across British Columbia. Expediting the development approvals process by reducing redundancies in the review process, while upholding the professional standards of qualified professionals (QPs), is another regulatory tool which would support the more timely delivery of new homes for British Columbians who need more housing options.

A significant portion of the cost to build a new home is attributed to government-imposed measures – whether it be fees, long review processes, or new requirements. Of particular concern is rising construction costs, which are being largely driven by building code requirements. One builder recently reviewed their project proformas over the past 15 years, which revealed that construction costs have soared to over \$562.59 per square foot – up from under \$204.19 per square foot. This is well beyond the Consumer Price Index rate of inflation. These costs ultimately fall to homebuyers and renters, compounding the affordability crisis across the province.

This professional reliance initiative comes at a time when the cost of delivering new homes has reached a breaking point. Higher construction costs, increased interest rates, and government fees combined with lengthy approval timelines make it increasingly difficult to bring new housing to market that homebuyers and renters can afford.

As has been noted in the debate on *Bill M 216*, municipalities already depend extensively on QPs to support the development approval process, and the proposed framework recognizes that work in a constructive and transparent way. For example, the municipalities of Vancouver, Burnaby, and Surrey all utilize a Certified Professionals

Program for the issuance of Building Permits. These programs would be enhanced through this legislation, by ensuring the original purpose of the programs (rapid permit issuance through professional review and reliance) are achieved.

The *Professional Reliance Act* offers an opportunity to apply those learnings province-wide, so that all communities can benefit from timely growth and responsible oversight. That said, there may have to be regulatory powers that differentiate between technical and urban design-related Development Permit requirements. Where technical requirements are definitive, urban design-related requirements require a more nuanced by nature and may be better suited for review by local governments.

Some additional issues for consideration at the Committee stage include:

- Ensuring the legislation applies to the City of Vancouver, which is under the *Vancouver Charter*;
- Ensuring the legislation applies to all trade permits, such as sprinklers, plumbing, and electrical permits;
- Instead of relying on the Superintendent for dispute resolution, move this task to the regulated professions (e.g. Engineers and Geoscientists of BC, Architectural Institute of BC); and
- Ensuring the legislation is coordinated with the *Building Act*.

Our organizations want more British Columbians to have more housing options available to them. Establishing a more consistent, streamlined, and professionally informed process will help support more timely approvals for new housing supply by reducing the uncertainty, risks, and carrying costs that currently delay projects and reduce affordability. We encourage all MLAs to pass *Bill M 216*, and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail as this makes its way through the legislative process

Sincerely,



Bridgitte Anderson
President and CEO
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade



Anne McMullin
President and CEO
Urban Development Institute