CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

ADVOCACY UPDATE

An update on CHBA BC's government relations activities

January 2019 | Issue 30

Provincial Consultations

Development Approvals Review Working Group

CHBA BC is an official member of the new Development Approvals Review Working Group (DARWG). The first working group meeting was held on December 7 and the first technical committee meetings in Metro Vancouver, Northern BC, Okanagan/Interior and the Island were held in late January. There are several CHBA BC members participating in the technical committees. The committee's final report is expected in June 2019. Any input in the meantime can be emailed to CHBA BC.

Asbestos

CHBA BC is responding to the Keeping Workers, the Public and the Environment Safe from Asbestos consultation in February. This consultation will review the costs, impacts, and benefits of a new licensing system, homeowner incentives for proper disposal and additional disposal sites in the province.

It is positive to see homeowner incentives for proper disposal raised. CHBA BC indicated this directly as a policy solution in its ALR, Budget, and money laundering submissions to government in 2018.

CHBA BC also met with Minister of Labour Harry Bains in December 2018, where the issues of employer safety, asbestos, and incentives for proper disposal were raised directly.

CleanBC

CHBA BC is tracking changes and consultations that will take place in 2019, based on the policy areas in the CleanBC plan. Some of the key policy areas identified in the plan include a retrofit code for existing buildings to come in 2024, new incentives for energy retrofits for homeowners, and a the concept of a labelling system to identify energy use on homes and buildings for sale or rent. CHBA BC will publish position papers on these topics as needed.

Speculation and Vacancy Tax Act

Information is coming by mail to all households within the speculation tax zones on how to file for an exemption. CHBA BC has requested specific guidance for members - that own land but not as homeowners - on how to comply. This will be communicated to members once available.

Money Laundering

CHBA BC submitted to the "Taking Action to Combat Money Laundering" consultation in early January. Read the submission here. Follow up is expected in March 2019.

Community Benefit Agreements

Please note that provincial discussions on Community Benefit Agreements do not impact residential construction. CHBA BC supports the work of other associations that have raised valuable concerns on this issue for their forms of construction. CHBA BC will get involved if residential construction projects were included in the future.

National Issues

Stress Test Recommendations delivered to PMO

CHBA National staff met with the staff from the Prime Minister's Office to discuss CHBA's recommendations for fixing the stress test and returning to 30-year mortgages for first-time homebuyers. Armed with CHBA's national consumer poll results (showing the concern of Canadians around affordability), and the fresh results of CHBA's ongoing member survey on the impacts of the stress test, CHBA's message was well understood and lead to very positive dialogue. Preliminary survey results show first-time homebuyers are down 33% nationally for members, with 94% of members responding indicating that the stress test is negatively impacting sales. This work will continue during CHBA's Day on the Hill in late February.

News from the Legislature



Image: Nanaimo, B.C. (Source: Government of BC Trade and Invest)

The long-awaited Nanaimo by-election took place on January 30. The BC NDP's Sheila Malcolmson won the seat, and retained the 44-seat majority for the BC NDP and BC Green Party, with 42 B.C. Liberals and 1 independent.

The next milestones at the Legislature are the Speech from the Throne on **February 12th**, and the B.C. Budget on **February 19th**.