

Advocacy Update



Canadian Home Builders' Association
BRITISH COLUMBIA

www.chbabbc.org

October, 2014

Connecting with MLA's

On October 6, CHBA BC co-hosted a reception in Victoria attended by 33 MLAs including a number of Cabinet Ministers. The event was on the first day of a rare fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly as elected officials returned to the B.C. legislature.

Members from CHBA BC's newly established Government Relations Committee had the opportunity to meet with the MLAs that helped to raise the profile of the Association and the residential construction industry. Prior to the reception, a briefing session was held to review and discuss CHBA BC policy priorities. CEOs representing ten associations from the Coalition of BC Businesses, of which CHBA BC is a member, were also in attendance at the evening MLA reception.

Meeting with Minister Shirley Bond

In a meeting with the Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training Minister Responsible for Labour, and Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Small Business, CHBA BC CEO Neil Moody provided an industry update pointing out that 134,500 jobs are created by B.C.'s residential construction sector. Also, engaging students at an earlier age in the school system and demonstrating that learning a skilled trade such as framing is not only in high-demand right now, but can also lead to a career with substantial opportunity for advancement, and this should form a part of the strategy to attract people to the trades. With the anticipated expansion of new industries in B.C., residential construction will play an important role in the building of communities. Access to training and programs for employers funded by the provincial government through the Canada Jobs Grant should be inclusive of the residential construction industry in order to help address the expected critical skilled trades shortages. Additional follow up meetings with Minister Bond are expected.

B.C. Throne Speech 2014

At the invitation of Premier Christy Clark, CEO Neil Moody represented CHBA BC at the Province of British Columbia's latest throne speech delivered on October 6, by Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon. Included in the speech was the Government's announcement to create a 10-year skills training plan aimed at helping young people enter the workforce. At the conclusion of the throne speech, those attending had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with members from all political parties in the lobby of the Legislature.

UBCM 2014 Annual Convention

CEO, Neil Moody and Assistant Director Government Relations & Communications, Jill Greenwood attended the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Annual Convention in Whistler from September 22-26. This provided an opportunity for CHBA BC to monitor policy direction being set, as well as to advocate for our members during discussions of local issues and initiatives. The Convention also offered the chance to build new and strengthen existing relationships with partner associations within the housing industry. In addition, we were able to share knowledge and discuss issues that affect our industry during meetings with municipal leaders as well as local MLAs.

Among the sessions attended, CHBA BC was present at the Cabinet Panel on Strong Economy and Jobs with:

- Honourable Mike de Jong, Minister of Finance;
- Honourable Teresa Wat, Minister of International Trade and Minister Responsible for the Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism;
- Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Tourism and Small Business;
- Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, Minister Responsible for Labour
- Honourable Amrik Virk, Minister of Advanced Education
- Honourable Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services

Premier Christy Clark addresses business community

CHBA BC President, Rob Capar; CEO, Neil Moody; and Assistant Director of Government Relations & Communications, Jill Greenwood attended the Vancouver Board of Trade Luncheon at the Vancouver Convention Centre on October 2, 2014. In her keynote address at the event, Premier Christy Clark outlined her government's next steps to secure prosperity through economic development while protecting the environment and building lasting partnerships with Aboriginal communities. At the conclusion of the premier's speech, we met briefly with Minister Rich Coleman to request an update on minimum education requirements for builders. The Minister replied that work is proceeding on the regulation. CHBA BC continues to have contact with the government, and continues to monitor progress.

Pre-Budget Submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance

CHBA BC submitted their policy priorities to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in their 2015 Pre-Budget Submission. The submission reflects the key issues that have been discussed at CHBA BC's Provincial Committee meetings, and are also in line with submissions by select industry partner associations to strengthen the message on the issue of Property Transfer Tax. The policy priorities highlighted include:

1. Protecting Housing Affordability
2. Mandatory Builder Education
3. Supporting Skilled Trades Development

BC Housing – Industry and Consumer Advisory Council (ICAC)

At a meeting in October with Shayne Ramsay, CEO of BC Housing, and participating members of the ICAC, an update was provided by the Homeowner Protection Office – Branch of BC Housing, on the progress of minimum education qualifications for builders. Work continues on the proposed regulation change to the *Homeowner Protection Act*, and CHBA BC will continue to meet with HPO. The Office of Housing & Construction Standards presented updates on licensing of home inspectors and modernization of the Building Code which follows several recent meetings that were held and attended by industry stakeholders as part of the consultation process.

Sprinklers and the Uniform Building Code

The Province is working to streamline and modernize British Columbia's building regulatory system, based on extensive review and stakeholder consultation. The current proposal for a uniform building code will give the Province sole authority to establish technical building requirements, including sprinkler requirements. Local governments will have a two-year transition period to amend bylaws that include sprinkler requirements to achieve uniformity with the Building Code. The Building and Safety Standards Branch and the Office of the Fire Commissioner is convening a Fire Sprinklers Working Group to develop recommendations on approaches to fire sprinkler requirements that increase consistency throughout British Columbia. CHBA BC will be present at the meetings that begin in October, and we ask that members forward any comments our concerns to Jill Greenwood, Assistant Director Government Relations and Communications.