

September 19, 2018

Submission to the *Land Owner Transparency Act* Consultation  
Submitted by email at [fcsp@gov.bc.ca](mailto:fcsp@gov.bc.ca)

### **About Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC (CHBA BC)**

CHBA BC represents over 2,000 members in the residential construction industry who work as home builders, renovators, tradespeople, service professionals, and others. CHBA BC members are small and medium-sized businesses creating jobs and economic benefits in all areas of the province.

Overall, the residential construction industry represents over 200,000 on-site and off-site jobs, \$11.9 billion in wages, and \$25 billion in investment value.

CHBA BC is not opposed to transparency measures. Home building is already a transparent and regulated industry, where permits are registered and approved by municipalities before any work can commence. However, additional transparency measures, applied equally on home builder corporations as they will be on individual land owners within a corporation, should not become an administrative burden or impede the speed of the development process, which is already in need of process improvements.

As it relates to the transparency discussion questions, CHBA BC is pleased to see that privacy is a concern for the provincial government. It is also a significant concern for CHBA BC. It is not relevant for the public to be aware of any additional information not already contained in B.C. Assessment data. CHBA BC is not concerned with additional information retained only to tax agencies and government, but the public benefit is unclear.

In some cases, it may invite additional speculation if the provincial government, agencies or home builders are not able to shield their identities in areas of possible development - either public or private. The adjacent sites inherently become much more valuable and invite speculation, especially given the lengthy time in the development approvals process between purchase and development notices.

In addition, there are outstanding questions to resolve for disclosure of data. It states on page 18 that:

This Division also requires the filing of disclosure reports where there is no legal transfer of an interest in land in two circumstances:

1. Existing owners of land that are relevant corporations, trustees and partners will be required to file a disclosure report by no later than a date to be prescribed. The purpose

of this requirement is to have a complete picture of beneficial ownership of land in British Columbia available in the land owner transparency registry at that date.

2. Reporting bodies will also be obligated to file an update disclosure report within two months of becoming aware of a change in beneficial ownership.

Required fees must be paid for the filing of all disclosure reports.

These remaining questions include:

- Will multiple reports have to be submitted for the same unit, even if it is from the same beneficial owner before purchase and no legal transfer takes place? For example, if a lot is subdivided into multiple units to be registered separately for purchase. It would not make sense to file multiple reports in the development process where it remains within the same beneficial ownership until the unit is purchased. Or, the time period to report changes should be increased to decrease the administrative burden.
- What will the fee costs be for these reports? If multiple reports and fees will take place per development unit, these fees will have to be absorbed by new home buyers. In large-scale developments, these fees could compound quickly and are counter to housing affordability.
- Will these reports impact any part of the development process? There is no reason that other aspects of development should be curtailed or stalled in any way if there are volume issues that result from either initial disclosures required or regular reporting.

CHBA BC believes further discussion with industry must take place on these questions before any policy is implemented. What may seem reasonable for individual homeowners to complete could be very time consuming and expensive for legitimate companies that require land to build on, and are not the intended target with this legislation.

It is positive to contribute to this discussion and it is clear much more consultation is needed. CHBA BC is pleased to contribute to any further discussions on this topic. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.