

Report to CHBA Board of Directors

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We are entering an interesting time in Alberta. The political landscape has changed significantly and the current government is facing some difficult choices. While there is momentum with ongoing initiatives, the political response by government seems to be out of step. The regulatory push in some areas is seeing push-back from government members worried about the legitimate challenge from the right side of the political spectrum. The response by ministries has opened the door to increased dialogue with industry and that has created a great opportunity for CHBA - Alberta. Ministry officials, who still see regulation in some areas as necessary, now know that they need stakeholders involved if they are to move on any initiative.

Issues

The **building envelope** issue is still on the government's radar and we have been working to develop a position that is helpful to government and supported by our membership. The urgency has lessened, but government remains interested in our approach. A broader consultation is occurring throughout January, so our position is firm by the start of the legislative session in late February.

The **ten-minute fire response** consultation was a reaction to a City of Calgary proposal that would see side yard, window placement, and use of fire resistant standards across the province increase to a standard beyond where we are now. It was concluded that there was no need to propose a code change at this time. Members of the CRMF stakeholder group who had developed solutions and best practices agreed to share them with the group. There was discussion around the need to move away from the 10 minute response criteria being critical to construction. The stakeholder group will continue to be a forum to discuss long-term solutions to this issue. The City of Edmonton has just recommended a solution of their own that is much less drastic than the initial Calgary proposal.

More recently, we discussed a new proposed code classification for **seniors housing**. Government is looking at options that could result in a new relaxed institutional rating or a safety enhanced residential rating. We had a very productive discussion on this issue with Municipal Affairs in December and I feel that we made a strong contribution. We will continue to work on this file and we are currently organizing a tour of seniors housing in south Edmonton, Beaumont and Leduc for government decision-makers, political and bureaucratic. The tour will occur in late January or early February.

Alberta Environment is having difficulty moving the **C&D waste** issue forward. At the meeting on December 15, 2010, Parliamentary Assistant, Cal Dallas brought in CHBA - Alberta and the Alberta Construction Association (ACA). This issue is more urgent from the commercial construction side from a project bidding standpoint, but government understands from both a commercial and residential standpoint the importance of two principles: level playing field and the need for regional variation – dependent on infrastructure. We will continue to work with government and the ACA on this issue.

The issue of **sprinklers in residential housing** is rearing its head again at the urging of Calgary Fire Chief, Bruce Burrell (also past president of the Fire Chiefs' Association). Municipal Affairs was fairly definitive in its response in mandatory sprinklers, but that had not deterred Chief Burrell. The issue received media attention and was featured on *Alberta PrimeTime* in early January. Alberta Municipal Affairs was very clear that they had no interest in mandating sprinklers in new homes.

The Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance (CEEA) placed advertisements in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* slamming the Home Building Industry and encouraging citizens to call their MLA to demand higher **energy efficiency standards**, and that those standards to be put into code. Apparently, radio spots began in Calgary mid December. We have responded with letters to the editor and we have prepared information packages for MLAs. We were careful to present a positive message without even referencing the ads. As an aside, the signatory of the letter in the ad is also the Executive Director of the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association of Canada (NAIMA). In their interactions with government officials, they have teamed up with the Pembina Institute.

We are facing a nervous government and we have an opportunity to be helpful while ensuring that we are creating a good business environment for our members, and we will take advantage of that opportunity.