

March 20, 2017

Delivered via e-mail (cityclerk@richmond.ca)

City of Richmond
City Clerk's Office
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, B.C.
V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor Brodie, councillors, and members of the Public Works and Transportation Committee:

Re: Building Energy Benchmarking Policy

We are writing in support of city staff's recommendations on advancing building energy benchmarking policy in B.C. The actions proposed to the Public Works and Transportation Committee represent an opportunity for the City of Richmond to assert itself as a leader in the transition to healthy, durable, and low emissions buildings. Governments at all levels are crafting plans to curb carbon pollution in light of new commitments under B.C.'s Climate Leadership Plan and the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. These measures will also help put Richmond on track to meet its Official Community Plan targets for reducing community-level emissions.

Building energy benchmarking is a key tool for enabling informed and sound decision-making in energy management. Requiring reporting enables governments to prioritize and evaluate policies including regulation and incentives, while public disclosure enables the real estate sector to measure and value high performance buildings. A growing number of municipalities in North America now require benchmarking and disclosure, along with two U.S. states and, recently, the Province of Ontario.

The Pembina Institute applauds the vision and commitment of the City of Richmond on climate action and building energy benchmarking, particularly the city's request for the province to consider mandatory benchmarking during development of the Climate Leadership Plan. The city can continue to lead by example by establishing a local benchmarking requirement in Richmond and disclosing energy use for City-owned buildings, as proof of the effectiveness of these policies. Such a requirement would build on progress made to date and accelerate the market transformation already underway in the city.

The Pembina Institute supports a clear and consistent framework for energy benchmarking and reporting, and believes that a provincial requirement will be the most effective and administratively feasible approach. We support staff's recommendation to bring forward a resolution to the Union of B.C. Municipalities and Lower Mainland Local Government Association calling on the province to take this step toward meeting B.C.'s commitments under the Pan-Canadian Framework and Pacific Coast Climate Leadership Action Plan. We also support the recommendation that Metro Vancouver's Climate Action Committee be engaged to develop a regional benchmarking requirement in the event of provincial inaction on this file.

Finally, we support staff's recommendation to begin developing the data analysis and communications infrastructure that will underpin a successful benchmarking policy. Utilities are working on implementation of automated data exchange using the Green Button and Portfolio

Manager Web Services protocols. At the same time, the Ministry of Energy and Mines has been investigating the creation of a Standard Energy Efficiency Data (SEED) Platform for B.C., which will greatly streamline the collection, analysis and storage of energy performance information. By partnering with these organizations, the City of Richmond can accelerate the development of B.C.'s benchmarking infrastructure and empower building owners and governments with improved access to data.

The implementation of a benchmarking and disclosure policy in the City of Richmond (and B.C. as a whole) would provide a low-cost and effective tool to reduce carbon pollution from buildings. Promoting high levels of energy performance will also improve the quality and health of the homes and buildings in which residents live and work, create jobs in the clean economy, and support innovation in the local supply chain.

We commend the City of Richmond for its continued leadership role in green building policy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Wu', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Karen Tam Wu
Director, Buildings and Urban Solutions Program
Pembina Institute