

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

RE: PROVINCIAL ACTION ON BUILDING ENERGY BENCHMARKING – LMLGA AND UBCM RESOLUTIONS

We the undersigned organizations understand that the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) will consider a “Provincial Action on Building Energy Benchmarking” Resolution (attached to this letter) at their respective 2017 conferences. The resolution, which is being forwarded by the City of Richmond, requests that the province “develop a requirement that buildings above a size threshold benchmark their energy performance and report this information to the province annually, and that the resulting data be available to local governments to inform their climate policy and programs.” **We are writing with hopes that the elected officials representing your local government at the LMLGA and UBCM conferences will support the “Provincial Action on Building Energy Benchmarking” Resolution.**

Benchmarking reporting policies require that buildings above a certain size threshold (often 50,000 square feet) track their energy and water consumption, and annually report this information. Twenty-five North American cities, the States of Washington and California, and the province of Ontario have enacted benchmarking requirements, along with numerous jurisdictions across Europe, the United Kingdom and Asia. In December 2016, the province of B.C. signed the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, which calls for building energy benchmarking and disclosure policy. Likewise, the province of B.C. is a signatory to the Pacific Coast Climate Leadership Plan (an agreement between B.C., California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska), which sets a target of 75% of large buildings reporting energy data in the Pacific Coast region.

The practice of benchmarking allows building owners to determine how their buildings perform compared against historical use and other similar buildings. In turn, this ongoing review helps building owners identify opportunities to save energy and water, thereby saving money on their utility bills. Moreover, access to benchmarking information allows governments and utilities to develop more targeted incentive programs, and better evaluate the impacts of building related policies, such as the energy provisions of the BC Building Code or the forthcoming BC Energy Step Code. Studies by the US Environmental Protection Agency, Urban Land Institute and MIT suggest that building portfolios benchmarked with Portfolio Manager achieve energy savings of 7% to 14% within four years, illustrating the value of benchmarking information to enabling better energy management.

Our organizations are prepared to work with provincial and local government partners in developing an energy benchmarking reporting framework that can lead to meaningful energy and emissions reductions, without being burdensome on B.C property owners or the development industry. While local governments may be enabled to establish benchmarking requirements, we believe that a provincial benchmarking requirement is likely to be the most administratively simple and impactful means of enacting benchmarking requirements in British Columbia. Indeed, given that the province of Ontario is introducing Canada's first subnational program, and more and more Canadian jurisdictions are expected introduce benchmarking reporting policies, a consistent pan-Canadian approach is needed. This consistent approach can best be developed at the provincial scale.

We are confident that B.C.'s commercial and residential building sectors are ready for a well-executed, consistent provincial benchmarking program. We ask that your local government join in the call for an effective provincial benchmarking regime in B.C., and support the "Provincial Action on Building Energy Benchmarking" Resolutions at both LMLGA and UBCM.

Sincerely,



Akua Schatz
Director, Advocacy and Development
Canada Green Building Council



Karen Tam Wu
Associate Regional Director, BC
Pembina Institute



Brooks Barnett
Manager, Government Relations & Policy
Real Property Association of Canada

Attachment: Draft Resolution Lower Mainland Local Government Association and the Union of BC Municipalities

PROVINCIAL ACTION ON BUILDING ENERGY BENCHMARKING City of Richmond

WHEREAS as described in the Canada Green Building Council’s “Energy Benchmarking, Reporting & Disclosure in Canada: A Guide to a Common Framework” mandatory energy benchmarking and reporting is a low cost, market-based means to enable buildings to reduce energy costs and GHG emissions;

AND WHEREAS the province of BC is a signatory to both the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change and Clean Growth and the Pacific Coast Climate Leadership Plan, both of which commit the province to implement benchmarking requirements for larger buildings;

AND WHEREAS a provincially administered benchmarking requirement similar to that adopted by the province of Ontario would be most impactful and administratively simple;

AND WHEREAS climate change threatens BC communities, and action in the built environment is necessary to mitigate climate change and realize economic opportunity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the province be requested to develop a requirement that buildings above a size threshold benchmark their energy performance and report this information to the province annually, and that the resulting data be available to local governments to inform their climate policy and programs.