CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

ADVOCACY UPDATE

An update on CHBA BC's government relations activities

May 2018 | Issue 22

#CHBAontheHill

Each year, CHBA members from across Canada head to Ottawa to meet with Members of Parliament (MPs) and discuss housing issues. A total of 55 meetings took place on May 29th, in addition to an evening reception that was attended by MPs, Senators, and Minister Responsible for CMHC, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos. CHBA BC representatives attended meetings with the following MPs:

- Mark Strahl, MP for Chilliwack-Hope and CPC Whip
- Elizabeth May, MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands and Green Party of Canada Leader
- Sukh Dhaliwal, MP for Surrey-Newton (LIB)
- Mel Arnold, MP for North Okanagan-Shuswap (CPC)
- Dan Albas, MP for Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola (CPC)
- Ron McKinnon, MP for Coquitlam-Port Coquitlam (LIB)
- Richard Cannings, MP for South Okanagan-West Kootenay (NDP)
- Don Davies, MP for Vancouver-Kingsway (NDP)
- Dr. Hedy Fry, MP for Vancouver Centre (LIB)

Members of Parliament were provided the latest CHBA National Policy Guide (click to view). This year's edition featured national polling data that helps to show Canadians' views on housing in the country. This included:

- 3 in 4 Canadians think that being middle class means you should be able to own a home;
- 80% believe becoming a homeowner is more difficult than in the past; and
- 7 in 10 Canadians see falling home ownership rates as a serious issue, and 81% see the challenges facing first-time buyers as indicating cracks in Canada's socio-economic system.

Photo: CHBA BC CEO Neil Moody, CHBA National CEO Kevin Lee, MP for Chilliwack-Hope Mark Strahl, CHBA National President and CHBA Fraser Valley member Nathan Stone, and CHBA Vancouver Island Executive Officer Kerriann Coady.

News from the Provincial Legislature

Speculation tax updates

On the speculation tax, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head and Leader of the Green Party Andrew Weaver raised some key issues to Finance Minister Carole James on May 17. This included the possibility that land for development could be impacted. Minister Carole James referenced consultation with CHBA BC and UDI on this issue in her response, and that changes may take place on this specific topic. View the exchange here.

New data was also released in May that suggests British Columbians will be most affected by the speculation tax. The Ministry of Finance predicts 32,000 properties will be affected by the tax: 20,000 owned by British Columbians, and the remaining 12,000 by foreigners and out-of-province Canadians. As indicated in previous issues, CHBA BC has met with the Minister of Finance on the speculation tax. CHBA BC has also raised to the Minister directly that significant contracts and jobs have been lost to this new tax, both inside and outside the tax boundaries, which is not captured in this specific analysis.

Legislature summer recess

The Legislature's final sitting day before summer was on May 31. According to the Parliamentary Calendar, the House is expected to resume on October 1, 2018. To view all bills passed in the previous session, click here.

Ongoing Consultations

Rental Housing Task Force

The Rental Housing Task Force launched its consultation period in May. CHBA BC and GVHBA presented directly to the Task Force members in late May. Read CHBA BC's submission here. The Task Force will be holding community meetings throughout June, in addition to accepting online feedback. To sign up or view meeting dates, visit this link.

B.C. Hydro Solar Net Metering Program

On April 20, the BC Hydro solar net metering program was amended with changing eligibility requirements for new applications. Members should be advised that the program itself is not changing, but that caps have been placed so that excess power generated does not exceed the home's annual electricity load.

CHBA BC has requested industry-specific information for contractors on this new process, and how the new assessment and eligibility will work moving forward. BC Hydro has also applied to the BC Utilities Commission for a review of the program to take place in late 2018.