

Open Letter to Ottawa City Council – May 10, 2021

Sent via E-mail and Registered Mail to City of Ottawa, Clerk's Office
Attn: Caitlin Salter-MacDonald, email Caitlin.Salter-MacDonald@ottawa.ca

Subject: Further Update re Excessive Radon + Outstanding Budget 2021 requests – Health/
Safety Issues

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Dear City of Ottawa Councillors:

This is further to my Open Letter to you dated Oct. 30, 2020 and my Open Letter to you dated Feb. 6, 2021. The Office of the City Clerk has confirmed that my Feb. 6, 2021 Open Letter was sent to you. But we have not received a response from you to either Open Letter.

I am writing today to again request a response from you to these two Open Letters, and to provide you with a further update regarding the risks of excessive radon.

An investigative report related to radon was published in the Toronto Star on May 2, 2021: "The invisible threat inside your home: Dangerous levels of radon gas are being found in more houses across Canada than ever before". For your convenience, we are enclosing a copy of this report.

The Toronto Star's investigation uncovered a number of important findings including:

- "The prevalence of deadly radon gas is rising across Canada as lax building codes allow dangerously high levels to be trapped inside newly built homes..."
- "...And with new buildings posing the highest risks of elevated radon levels.....modern construction methods have created the unintended consequences of trapping the gas inside..." (p. 2)
- "...the radon threat could be neutralized with simple and affordable technology.." (p. 6).

An Ottawa resident, Nizar Abbas, who lives in Councillor Kitts riding, was quoted in that article:

"..It upset me because it puts my wife and my children in direct danger, said the 43-year-old engineer. They are playing with people's lives.." (p. 7).

The Toronto Star also published a supplemental piece on May 2, 2021: "How some Canadian communities are taking their own steps to address the risks of radon gas". Again, we are enclosing a copy of this article for your convenience. In this article, the investigative journalists noted that in Ontario, Guelph, Kingston and Hamilton have taken steps to protect their citizens.

"...There's no surprises anymore. It's just part of building a house," says Nicholas Rosenberg, a program manager at the City of Guelph. "I don't hear complaints about it anymore..." (p.1).

Many who are aware of this situation remain very concerned that the City of Ottawa is ignoring this serious health threat of excessive radon in relation to newly built homes.

Please note that we are also communicating with Dr. Vera Etches about this serious matter and we are requesting that the board of directors of Ottawa Public Health take appropriate action concerning this. We note that six Ottawa City Council representatives sit on that board:

- Councillor Jean Cloutier
- Councillor Keith Egli
- Councillor Eli El-Chantiry
- Councillor Glen Gower
- Councillor Teresa Kavanagh
- Councillor Shawn Menard.

We again request that you take immediate steps to adequately protect the citizens of the City of Ottawa related to newly built homes, i.e., both in terms of excessive radon, and municipal inspections/Ontario Building Code violations.

Please respond.

Yours truly,



Dr. Karen Somerville, C.Dir.
President

Enclosures:

- Toronto Star, May 2, 2021 by Robert Cribb, Declan Keogh, and Paleah Moher: "The invisible threat inside your home: Dangerous levels of radon gas are being found in more houses across Canada than ever before"
- Toronto Star, May 2, 2021 by Robert Cribb, Declan Keogh, and Paleah Moher: How some Canadian communities are taking their own steps to address the risks of radon gas

Copy: Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health

Founded in 2004, Canadians for Properly Built Homes (CPBH) is an independent, national, not for profit corporation dedicated to healthy, safe, durable, energy efficient residential housing for Canadians, and is the only organization of its kind in Canada. Working for consumer awareness and protection, CPBH is run by a volunteer Board of Directors and is supported by a volunteer Advisory Council of industry experts and other key stakeholders.