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Volume 17, no. 2, Spring 2022

National Edition

Greetings,

CPBH's 18th anniversary is in May. What an incredible journey. Remarkable people all over Canada, and in the United States too, have helped us learn and grow and develop an informed voice to speak out for thousands of Canadians fighting for the homes they paid for. In turn, Canadians have reached out to us in their thousands as they search for ways out of the horror that can be a newly built home riddled with building code violations. We have tried our best to help each one.

We sought out and found industry experts, professionals and people with a range of expertise willing to share their time and knowledge. The search for people willing to help us never ends, just like our advocacy. To all these people and organizations, our sincere thanks for your generosity. To those struggling to find solutions, you are not alone. You inspire us and keep us working to do our best.

To those who have donated to CPBH, our doors remain open to help consumers because of you.

Each year, we ask you once again to help us. The task is large, our expenses are increasing, even while we continue to be frugal. As always, no one at CPBH gets paid a cent. We are all volunteers. So please take a moment and [make a donation to our Spring Fundraising Campaign](#) today (<http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/what-you-can-do/donate/>). Thank you for your support.

Have you checked out the [Media Archives](#) section of our web site (<http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/archives/media-archives/>)? You'll find media coverage of our issues dating back to 2007, some of which may be helpful to consumers as they fight their battles for their homes. We painstakingly saved the articles as documents on our site to ensure links are not lost with age. You are welcome to suggest new articles related to our [Mission and Vision](#) as you find them (<http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/what-were-doing/mission-vision-values/>). We pick up the national and major media stories, but regional and local stories are more difficult for us to track. Please send your suggestions to info@canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com. Thanks for your help!

We have several updates for you today, so please read on.

Stay well and enjoy the good weather,

Karen Somerville and Alan Greenberg
Canadians for Properly Built Homes Co-founders

#VoteFordOut2022 #NoUSEDfurnaces #RadonAction #NeverGiveUp #ConsumerProtection #EnforceTheCode
#TarionIsBeyondRepair #Don'tStopBelievin' #EndTarionMonopolyNOW #DumpTheLAT



Build 'em faster!

We noted last fall after the federal election that for the first time, **we have a Minister of Housing and a total of four federal ministers involved in our issues**. We set out the opportunities and wrote to each of them. We are sorry to say that they have not responded, but we continue to communicate our concerns to them. Sadly, housing quality has not been acknowledged as a federal issue by elected officials in our experience. Here are the opportunities:

<http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Nov.-2021-Opportunities-for-the-Canadian-Federal-Government.pdf>

The **housing crisis has brought calls for building more housing as fast as possible** from the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Because we have watched politicians at all levels consistently ignore the problem of quality in housing construction for two decades now, speeding up construction sets off alarm bells at CPBH. The lack of building code enforcement we all now live with will undoubtedly become worse.

How many of these quickly built homes will be built to code? How many families will live the nightmare of trying to get the home they paid for, free of building code violations? How many will live with mould and become ill? How many will freeze in their newly built homes? How many will be stuck with a home they put their life's savings into, that they can neither fix nor sell? How many bankruptcies and family breakdowns will we see?



Bring on the Bill of Rights!

A Home Buyer's Bill of Rights with a legal right to a home inspection was part of the Liberal's platform in last fall's federal election. This is a much-needed consumer protection measure, and we will monitor the progress of **Minister of Housing, Ahmed Hussen** as well as participate in any opportunities for public involvement. Interesting to note that while Minister Hussen's mandate is massive, he does yet seem to have a department. Most of his initiatives appear to be interdepartmental and intergovernmental. He is listed on the Infrastructure Canada website.

The initiative was included in the 2022 Budget, so that's good news. The budget, "confirmed a plan for Housing Minister Ahmed Hussen to engage with provinces and territories over the next year "to develop and implement a Home Buyers' Bill of Rights and bring forward a national plan to end blind bidding." That bill would also ensure home inspections are a legal right for buyers before purchase, according to the budget." The Prime Minister has declined to speak to a timetable for getting this work done, a disappointment waiting for important changes that will help Canadians. <http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Apr.-21-2022-Global-News-Trudeau-offers-no-timetable-on-promised-homebuyers-rights-bill-as-prices-soar.pdf>



Uh, just a minute...

We have been in touch with **National Resources Canada** on several occasions to talk about **Energy Star** program issues and the **Green Grants** initiative being paid out on homes still under warranty.

We brought examples from consumers to them of Energy Star homes that don't meet the standards or are not inspected by independent inspectors, despite owners having paid a premium for a home built to the higher rating.

On Green Grants, newly built homes that are as little as six months old have qualified for new windows and door grants, for example, when they are still under their new home warranty. This means your federal tax dollars were accessed to address improperly installed windows and doors by the builder, rather than hold the builder accountable to do the job correctly. This is a job they have been paid to do properly and to code through the cost of the house.

Representatives from both areas of NRCan acknowledged the challenges we described and have taken these concerns back to their organizations for further examination. Their program assumption that homes are built to code has proven to be false, so program updates are needed. An update from NRCan on progress would be appreciated.



Welcome to the Housing Advocate

The federal government recently announced the appointment of **Marie-Josée Houle as Canada's first federal housing advocate, focussed on the National Housing Strategy**. She reports through the Canadian Human Rights Commission, has a three-year mandate and brings a wealth of experience to the role.

Her office organized a seminar for interested parties in April and CPBH took part. It was an interesting presentation. As is often the case with organizations at the federal level, the quality of housing is not on their radar. CPBH has requested a meeting with Ms. Houle. More: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/canadian-human-rights-commission-welcomes-canadas-first-federal-housing-advocate>



Calgary Building Services conducts three-month investigation and lays 51 charges for building code violations

Kudos to the Calgary Building Services team for meeting this serious problem head on with decisive action.

"Building safety violations pose a serious risk to homeowners and the community at large," building safety manager Cliff de Jong said in a Wednesday press release."

"The seriousness and magnitude of these violations and the impact to unsuspecting potential buyers in this red-hot real estate market led the City of Calgary to conduct an investigation and lay charges."

The article goes on to say, "If found guilty of Alberta Safety Codes violations, Dhaliwal Homes Ltd. and the people involved can be fined up to \$100,000 per offence and a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months."

"They can also face a maximum fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment not exceeding one year if found guilty of bylaw infractions. The matter is now before the Provincial Court of Alberta in Calgary."

<http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Apr.-13-2022-Global-News-51-charges-laid-against-Calgary-home-developer-for-building-code-violations.pdf>



Ontario Votes

The Ontario provincial election has become a heated battleground as Ontarians head to the polls on June 2.

We summarized the parties' positions on CPBH issues here: <http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Spring-2022-Properly-Built-Times-vol-17-no-1-final.pdf>

With these cards are on the table, Ontario's new home buyers/owners can take this into consideration as they cast their votes. Buying a newly built home is probably the largest purchase anyone makes.

We hope to see as many MPPs elected as possible who support consumer protection for buyers of newly built homes and our full range concerns with the new home construction regime in Ontario.



CPBH Deputation on Bill 109: Build More Homes for Everyone Act 2022

CPBH's President, Dr. Karen Somerville, made a deputation on April 11 that raised questions about the quality of all these proposed homes to be built. Shortly thereafter, the Ontario government started tweeting about housing quality!

You can find about 15 videos of Karen's presentation and questions from three MPPs about housing quality on CPBH's Facebook and Twitter accounts. Here's the presentation: <http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/April-11-2022-final-CPBH-Deputation-re-Bill-109-More-Homes-for-Everyone-Act-2022.pdf>.



Something new on the landscape

In March, the Ontario NDP tabled **legislation to create a Consumer Watchdog**. This initiative would establish an independent office to deal with violations consumer protection legislation and consumer rights in all areas, including newly built homes.

Consumer protection used to have some teeth in Canada, but that has declined over the years to the point of near oblivion. Consumer organizations were defunded by governments and unable to continue their work. It is largely a provincial responsibility.

When the Bill came to vote in the Ontario legislature, every MPP in the House voted in favour, except every Conservative MPP. Could this be because the big business that funds the PCs is not in favour of consumer protection?

When we have consumer protection, everyone wins. Canadians' rights are enforced. Consumers have confidence in the marketplace. Well run businesses don't need a skewed playing field, nor do they need unscrupulous businesses giving their sector a bad name.

"A vibrant economy requires consumers; it requires confident consumers, and it requires fairness. It does not help the economy when consumers are ripped off and cheated. When consumers feel that the system is fair, that they are getting what they pay for, that they are treated with dignity; they are going to be more confident in spending and that is good for the economy."

Senator Pierrette Ringuette, Keynote Speech, Consumers 150 Conference, September 2017

Have a look at an article by independent consumer advocate Barbara Captijn, in honour of World Consumer Rights Day, March 15. She asks, "Who's against protecting consumers? Give me one good reason."

<http://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Mar.-9-2022-Toronto-Sun-CAPTIJN-A-consumer-protection-law-would-benefit-all-Ontarians.pdf>

British Columbia has a Consumer Protection regulator called Consumer Protection BC. It may provide good insights for a similar government agency in Ontario.



About CPBH

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. CPBH earned "partner" status with the Canadian Consumer Information Gateway (Industry Canada). Follow us:



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