

# National Edition

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In this issue

- Co-founders' Message
- Radon Action
- Natural Resources Canada
- Builder to Lose Licence
- Calls for Building Code Update
- Calgary Building Services
- Consumer Protection
- Join the conversation
- Remembering Dr. Peter Silverman

Hello everyone,

It's been a very busy spring and summer. Many thanks to those who contacted us about our 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We gratefully acknowledge your kind encouragement. You keep us going.

Now well into the fall, we find the environment has once again changed dramatically. Unrecognizable prices wherever you look, inflation, interest rates, destructive weather, and so much unrest in the world. The red-hot real estate market cooled but rental costs soared. As the build-homes-faster push continues, so does our concern for the quality of those homes and the families who will live in them.

We have seen some seeds taking root: An article in the Globe and Mail; our work with NRCan; our advocacy, calling out hypocrisy and anti-consumer practices. These are just a few examples of threads we keep working on that could lead to positive change. We will keep pushing because that is how every accomplishment we have had has been achieved. It is long and sometimes weary work. But helping individuals who come to us, at their wits' end, with building code violations, uncooperative builders and warranty programs, is always front and centre to us, no matter how busy we are pushing governments and looking for more people who can help us. And it is you who help us do all that.

Someone noted recently that you would be hard-pressed to find a group other than CPBH that has spent more time and given more thought to the new home construction regime in Canada and how it works for consumers. Guilty as charged: We dug in, learned, participated at every government level, engaged with industry, communities and individuals. We have thought about how the regime works

long and hard and the alternatives. And it is our considered opinion that Canada's model for new home construction, regulation and warranty does not work, nor has it worked for a very long time.

From the wise observations of U of Toronto Law professor Jacob Ziegel in 1976 ([https://canadiansforproperlybuilt homes.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/1976Globe\\_Mail-ProfessorZiegel.pdf](https://canadiansforproperlybuilt homes.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/1976Globe_Mail-ProfessorZiegel.pdf)), who said in part, "We ought no longer to tolerate the creation of legislatively sanctioned semi-private monopolies exercising important statutory powers" to the construction industry's ongoing refusal to include hurricane clips on homes to keep the roofs from blowing off, to the lack of qualified municipal home inspectors to inspect new homes, despite collecting money for doing so through building permits, to the National Research Council's National Building Code which no province is required to follow, the entire model is broken and further deteriorating – if consumers are to have safe and healthy homes to live in.

Given the pressures of climate change, increasing storms causing severe damage, the urgent need for more housing and affordability, it is time for the federal government to take a leadership role. A new model is needed that balances the need for housing with a level of quality that ensures safety and responds to the need to cut CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and radon risks. Given the number of jurisdictions and the patchwork quilt of authorities involved in the regime, only the federal government has the breadth of vision and ability to set out a path forward. We are calling on them to do so.

We are proud of CPBH's many accomplishments. Our advocacy has impacted awareness of properly built homes among governments, media, academe, industry and communities across Canada. CPBH is recognized among the media as a go-to source on home construction regimes and consumer impacts. We're proud to see our president among the ranks of experts on [Informed Opinions](#). Our engagement with governments at all levels leads them to seek our input. Many say that, but for CPBH's activism, the largest review of new home regulation and warranty ever undertaken in Canada – the Wynne government's Tarion Review – would not have been undertaken, nor would it have had the level of public participation it received. That review left Canadians with a road map, provided by Justice Cunningham, with insights and recommendations that can serve to improve regimes in any jurisdiction. Has all of it made a difference? Yes, it has. But there's always more work to do.

**That said, our Fall Fundraising Campaign is on now and we have new home buyers in trouble who need our help.** So we are asking for your help. All funds raised go to the most basic needs to keep operations going, not a penny is wasted, and our whole team works for free. Their work comes from the heart, since most have lived through the experience. We're often told that the work we do for new home buyers and owners is essential. CPBH is the only organization of its kind, where people in trouble can turn without worrying about cost. Please help us continue to offer our help by chipping in whatever amount you can here: <http://canadiansforproperlybuilt homes.com/what-you-can-do/donate/> . Thank you for your support.

Please read on for the updates we have for you. Contact us anytime. We love to hear from you by email or social media.

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

*#ConsumerProtection #NeverGiveUp #EnforceTheCode #NoUSEDfurnaces #RadonAction  
#Don'tStopBelievin' #YouAreNotAlone #HealthAndSafety*



**November is Radon Action Month!**



This odorless gas seeps into buildings and is responsible for over 5,000 lung cancer deaths per year in Canada. The only way to know if your home's levels exceed Health Canada safety recommendations is to test. November is the best time to start, because that is when the cooler weather causes us to close windows and doors, allowing radon gas to accumulate in our homes. Because of modern construction methods, newly built homes may accumulate radon gas at a higher rate than older homes – an unintended consequence of newer construction methods. According to this Toronto Star article about a national study,

one in five homes nationally exceed the recommended level of radon. They point to that number being higher in newly built homes: <https://canadiansforproperlybulthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/May-2-2021-Toronto-Star-The-invisible-threat-inside-your-home-Dangerous-levels-of-radon-gas-are-being-found-in-more-houses-across-Canada-than-ever-before.pdf> .

Follow the link for what you should know, how to get a test kit and reducing radon in your home: <https://takeactiononradon.ca/learn/radon-action-month/> .

Once again this year, municipalities are being challenged to join the Radon Test Kit Challenge: <https://takeactiononradon.ca/resources/100-radon-test-kit-challenge/> . Participating municipalities get 100 kits that they can distribute to participants for free. Details are on the site as well as the results from many municipalities that participated last year.

There are lots of examples on the website – Weyburn, Sask where 63% of homes tested above the Health Canada recommendation; Barrière, BC found 55% and Revelstoke BC found 46% above the safety level. In previous years' results, Dauphin, MB found 71% of homes above the safety level. There are also communities where results were very low, for instance, Abbotsford, BC found only 1% of homes tested above the Health Canada threshold for safety. Note that the percentages are of tested homes, not all homes in the community. The only way to know for sure about your home is to test.

Look here for information about radon and newly built homes: <https://canadiansforproperlybulthomes.com/what-weve-learned/health-issues/> .

Be safe. Test and take action.



## Natural Resources Canada

We are pleased to tell you that our discussions with NRCan about issues with the **Energy Star** program and the **Green Grants** initiative are bearing fruit. You will recall that we brought forward examples from consumers where Energy Star homes didn't meet the standards or are not inspected by independent inspectors, and Green Grants were being used to address window and door problems in new homes still under warranty.

A director at NRCan recently told us that he and his team value our connection with people using the program and our ability to provide him with useful feedback. We will continue to work with NRCan to bring the information to them they need as they assess and review. We'll let you know when there is news.



## Globe and Mail: Ontario regulator moves to strip builder of its licence

We were pleased to see Real Estate Reporter Shane Dingman's September 14 article in this national newspaper telling of a proposal by the Home Construction Regulatory Authority (HCRA) to revoke Adi

Development's licence. The Burlington, Ontario developer has been called out for unethical practices including "allegedly cancelling agreements of purchase and sale unless buyers agreed to large increases". This is the first such move by HCRA which has been operating since February 2021. One condo buyer involved in these problems is quoted in the article as having signed for a unit at \$340,000, only to be asked for \$618,000 later, with a potential delivery date as late as 2029. The case has not been proven in court.

Home building regulation was removed from Tarion, considered a conflict of interest as they also backstopped builders' warranties, after many years of advocacy by CPBH President Dr. Karen Somerville and many other activists. Karen notes that, "...the real issue is that HCRA has been too slow to act" and "Why haven't they ramped up faster? They had \$7.8 million surplus in the first year, we've asked why haven't they added more staff. Its annual report talks about investigating only 10 per cent of 800 consumer complaints, ... It's pretty surreal for many of us watching this."

"A year and a half post their (HCRA's) official door opening, I struggle to say it's a good first step," said Karen.

We thank Shane Dingman for reporting on this issue. [Read the article here.](#) The same problem, however, has been cropping up in different parts of the country. We ask new home buyers to be careful before signing an agreement of purchase and sale. Developers have lawyers working for them. You need a team to help you <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/home-buyers-safe-building-codes-1.4795759?cmp=rss&fbclid=IwAR1zcTPpehClcuiOLkTW6Hubs0Zn6K4BgXSbWKzxtJATJ-I71mwdtZtQ3j8>, particularly during these turbulent times.



## **Calls for Building Code Update**

An October 16 report by Jason Vermes of CBC Radio looked at tornado frequency and locations, Environment Canada alerts and the vulnerable part of your home when they hit: your roof. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/whatearth/tornado-alerts-hurricane-straps-canada-1.6610311>

"With growing knowledge of the frequency and potential impact of storms...it's time to reconsider how homes are protected against the threat of tornadoes." We couldn't agree more.

We have provided examples before of the swift devastation that can take place and the need for hurricane clips to be made mandatory in building codes <https://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Properly-Built-Times-vol-13-no-2.pdf>. These clips are mandatory in the US south because they keep the roof on house during severe winds. They are cheap and easy to install when the house is being built. Some Canadian builders are installing them voluntarily. You can have a look at them at your local building supply store. But can you get a builder to install them when building your home, code requirement or no code requirement? If anyone is successful in doing this, please let us know. If governments won't make them mandatory, maybe the insurance industry would like to weigh in on the benefits. They are a powerful lobby.

You can help us keep pushing by writing to your federal, provincial and municipal representatives, and copying us. Here's an example from Florida that shows what can be accomplished <https://canadiansforproperlybuilthomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Oct.-9-2022-CBS-Babcock-Ranch-Solar-powered-hurricane-proof-town-takes-a-direct-hit-from-Hurricane-Ian.pdf>.

Damage from a tornado is seen in Dunrobin, Ont., west of Ottawa on Sept. 22, 2018. The storm tore roofs off of homes, overturned cars and felled power lines. (Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press)



## **Follow up: Calgary Building Services conducts three-month investigation and lays 51 charges for building code violations**

We told you about this story in the spring and wrote to the Calgary Building Services team for meeting this serious problem head on with decisive action. We also wrote to Calgary's Mayor about this positive step. Read the article here: <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>

We thought it may serve others to be aware of what Calgary had done, so we wrote to the mayors of



all provincial capitals and big cities. Then we looped in the mayors of many more urban centres across Canada.

The article was written by Paula Tran, Digital Coordinator and Reporter with Global Calgary's 770 CHQR. Some of the issues involved bear repeating:

1. violating building safety requirements poses serious risks to homeowners and the whole community;
2. the severity, magnitude and impact of code violations on buyers unaware of the risks need to be investigated and charges laid where appropriate;
3. in Alberta, safety code violations can lead to significant fines and imprisonment.

Consumers need and deserve protection through code enforcement from their governments.



## **Joining the conversation on Twitter**

CPBH is always pleased to see people interested in our issues and news following us on Twitter and getting into the conversations. Not familiar with Twitter? No problem. A number of our followers now tweet and join the chat since we provided a quick and easy tutorial.

If you would like to join us for a 30-minute introduction to Twitter, send an email to [info@canadiansforproperlybulthomes.com](mailto:info@canadiansforproperlybulthomes.com) and we will be pleased to arrange it with you. You will find that it's fun, easy and that breaking news often shows up there first.

Drop us a line.



## Remembering Dr. Peter Silverman

Peter Silverman passed away October 7, 2021. He was a valued member of CPBH's team for many years. His extraordinary life experiences led him all over the world and to journalism, working as a consumer ombudsman appearing on Toronto's local news station, and so much more. For their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, City News Toronto has compiled some clips of Peter as he championed the causes of ripped-off consumers.

We miss him and hope that you will enjoy the video that is being shared in his memory. Peter was one of a kind.

Tweet by @CityNewTO –

'Watch it buddy': Peter Silverman and his #SilvermanHelps segments became part of Toronto folklore. On Citytv's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we look back at some of the most dramatic moments from his storied career #Citytv50 [pic.twitter.com/Gu2DGJ4rEd](https://pic.twitter.com/Gu2DGJ4rEd)



## 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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