Greetings Mayor and Council

The Province has formally adopted the BC Energy Step Code, creating a voluntary compliance path within the BC Building Code for better than code energy efficiency performance in new buildings. It establishes progressive performance targets that support market transformation from the current energy-efficiency requirements in the BC Building Code to net zero energy ready buildings by 2032.

The step-code focus on high performance building envelops mirrors the direction and structure established in Vancouver’s Zero Emissions Building Plan adopted by Council in July 2016 and in fact ground in, and builds upon, the research and industry consultation the City undertook in the development of that Plan. Vancouver’s updated Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning (Nov 2016) requirements for energy modelling and whole building air tightness testing represent Step 1 of the Provincial Code and the heat loss and energy use limits for residential, office, and hotel buildings represent Step 2. The final Step corresponds to Passive House levels of performance in residential buildings. The only notable difference between our Zero Emissions Building Plan and the Step Code is that the former includes greenhouse gas emissions limits in addition to the limits on heat loss and energy use.

The Provincial Step Code is strategically significant to Vancouver achieving its zero emissions buildings targets as it aligns private sector innovation, professional practice, and local government policies across the Province so they focus on finding practical and cost effective solutions to the same challenges. At the same time, it creates a clear and strong signal to the building component manufacturers that there will be a rapidly increasing market demand for high performance windows, heat recovery ventilators, well insulated and air sealed wall panels, etc. This will, in turn, serve to reduce the costs and selection of these products and therefore make adoption of future steps more cost effective for our residents.

For more details please see the official announcement below.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our staff for their leadership in helping to develop an approach in Vancouver that the Province has now adopted. If you have any questions please follow up with Doug Smith at doug.smith@vancouver.ca

Regards,

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