



CITY OF PORT MOODY

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 24, 2025
Email: HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Boyle,

SUBJECT: BILL M 216 – 2025 PROFESSIONAL RELIANCE ACT

In response to a private member's bill tabled on October 21, 2025, Bill M 216 – 2025 *Professional Reliance Act*, I am writing to share serious concerns about the proposed approach, which would impact local approval authorities.

The City of Port Moody has been proactive in improving our development approval processes and in delivering housing for our residents, including through UBCM funding which allowed our team to develop and implement a range of improvements in our development process. Further, the City remains an active and willing partner with the Province on delivering housing: our most recent report on the provincial housing targets ([link](#)) shows that we are on track with the two-year cumulative targets set by the Province, and we have met all provincial housing legislation timelines in our efforts to accelerate a range of housing options within our community.

While we appreciate that the goal is to accelerate the expansion of housing supply in communities across the province through potential improvements to the development approach and review processes, the Bill goes too far and based on our front-line municipal experience, is likely to result in negative unintended consequences.

Several concerns have been identified, including in correspondence from other cities, UBCM and the Planning Institute of BC (PIBC). These letters have identified a range of major concerns that Port Moody shares, including the following:

Loss of local discretion and autonomy:

Local expertise is essential for development permits and zoning reviews, as understanding municipal regulations requires knowledge of both the rules and their context. Development permits are collaborative tools for municipalities and applicants to achieve community, environmental, heritage, and water management goals. These processes enable tailored solutions that improve both specific sites and the wider community. The proposed Bill's approach to professional reliance imposes a uniform solution on varied permit types, overlooking their specific needs. It would lead to a reduction in local input and control, with a reliance on Professional Governance Act (PGA) professionals at permit submission and plan review stages.

The Bill would require local governments to accept certain technical submissions certified by provincially-regulated professionals. Local governments will lose the ability on technical submissions to question or verify the work of PGAs, unless elevated to a complaint to the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG). The authority to require an independent review is therefore moved from municipal staff to a provincial appointee who may have little capacity and who may not have an understanding of the local context or specific technical issues.

This legislation would apply to any technical submission required under a development project approval process. For example, for a development permit application, the City would have to accept the architectural drawings as meeting relevant design guidelines. Likewise, the City must accept certified submissions or drawings required under a building permit application as meeting all relevant Building Code provisions. It is unknown how this bill may apply to other applications and permit types (OCP amendment, rezoning, subdivision, riparian area protection, heritage revitalization agreement, etc.).

City staff frequently identify critical errors in designs prepared by PGA professionals and note that said professionals often face significant pressure from developers to sign-off on their work quickly and within budget, and to designs that suit the developers' interests with limited consideration of broader policy and long-term sustainability.

City staff currently provide significant value for the public and future property owners by conducting reviews, which ensure an appropriate level of safety is upheld for the community, while often reducing costs. To continue to safeguard the community, local governments may be compelled to implement far more onerous and rigorous bylaw and permit requirements to avoid issues forced by Bill M 216, which in turn exacerbates the 'red tape' issue that this legislation seeks to avoid.

Loss of professional peer review:

Peer reviews are a fundamental aspect of professional practice for any registered official: they reduce risk by checking accuracy, ensuring compliance, identifying issues, and mitigating errors that can occur through the planning process. This is especially relevant for issues of significant life safety, public infrastructure impacts, and

applications with potential for litigation. This critical peer review stage will be lost with the new legislation.

City infrastructure ownership oversight:

Consistent with the Local Government Act provisions for subdivisions, the City often has municipal owned infrastructure, such as roads and utilities that are necessary to support a development, designed and constructed by the developer's professionals and contractors. On completion, this infrastructure is owned and maintained by the City. We are not sure as to how Bill M 216 will apply to these circumstances but it creates great concern as the City must ensure the development provided infrastructure meets public infrastructure design and quality requirements and long term operational needs – if the infrastructure is not designed adequately and compatible with future needs and long term plans, it can have significant long term costs for the municipality and public.

In order to control this aspect of development, under Bill M 216, municipalities may choose to instead design and construct development servicing themselves which has the potential to add costs and delays to development projects as municipalities may not be able to meet the development projects timelines or coordinate contractors and schedules as efficiently as is possible in a singularly controlled project.

Liability concerns:

Local governments remain accountable for regulations but lack adequate and independent oversight powers. Despite Bill M 216 stating that local governments will not be liable for damages, that will not prevent an injured party from naming a local government in its claim. The local government will then have to go through a court process to be removed from the action.

Further, municipalities are often subject to joint and several liability: Even if the professional is found have a vast majority of liability in a claim, the municipality, with only a small share of liability, ends up being responsible to pay for the majority of the claim costs as the professional does not have the financial capacity. Given the wording in the Bill compared to existing immunizing statutory language, and in the context of the case law, local governments will carry residual liability in spite of this attempt at statutory protection, and where the builder, owner, subcontractor, or PGA professional is dissolved or insolvent, the local government could be jointly and severally liable.

Life safety:

As the protection of the public interest is a paramount responsibility of local government, ensuring that buildings, lands, and infrastructure are “life safe” is a critical facet of this role. The City ensures that this occurs by way of critical review and implementation by staff to ensure submissions meet a number of bylaws, regulations and policies, whether in the planning, construction, completion, or maintenance stages. We recognize that there are many pressures on PGA professionals, including timelines, budget limitations, local expertise, and the complexity of applicable regulation, which is why staff serve the role that they do for the public: a sober second look and review to ensure that development remains life safe. It is very common for our staff to find errors with

technical submissions or with actual construction on site. The reduction of safety of people and the incidence of costly building failures would be a predictable outcome of Bill M216.

Professional Inconsistency:

Bill M 216 only applies to PGA's, such as engineers, biologists, architects, and agrologists; other registered professionals, such as Registered Professional Planners, Registered Building Officials, surveyors, and heritage professionals etc. are excluded. This creates circumstances where a given local government can question some professionals' work, but others are entirely exempt by way of this bill.

Local governments and their staff operate on the front lines of our communities, bringing an incredible depth of unique knowledge and professional expertise that is critical to the review and approval of development and building permits to ensure the safety of the public and the environment. The proposed legislation represents a fundamental loss in local discretion and autonomy, and increases risk to the public and the environment. This legislation could increase the costs and timelines for development approvals, result in potentially unprofessional "approvals" by consultants with no applicable expertise, increase risk for local governments and homeowners, and cause many local governments to abandon regulation altogether due to seriously increased risk and liability.

The City of Port Moody was unaware of the bill's introduction and has not had meaningful discussions with provincial officials or stakeholders. The City expects that local governments are consulted through standard channels before any broad legislative changes affecting them are considered. We urge the provincial government to reconsider this legislation and engage with municipalities and UBCM before moving forward any further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meghan Lahti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Meghan" and the last name "Lahti" clearly distinguishable.

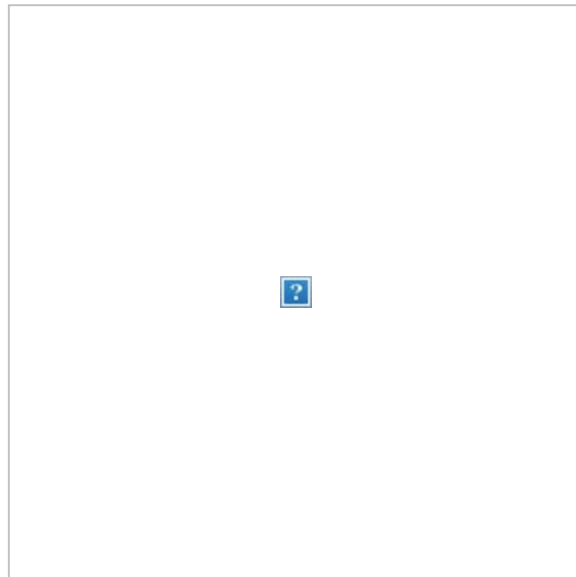
Mayor Meghan Lahti

cc: All BC Municipalities
MLA Rick Glumac

From: [Rob Kerslake](#)
To: [Daniel Drexler](#); [Tasha Buchanan](#)
Subject: Fw: Response encouraged to the professional reliance bill
Date: November 25, 2025 6:10:56 PM

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From: UBCM <ubcm@ubcm.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, November 19, 2025 3:02:05 PM
To: Rob Kerslake <rkerslake@barriere.ca>
Subject: Response encouraged to the professional reliance bill



www.ubcm.ca | November 19, 2025 | [View in browser](#)

UBCM encourages local government response to Bill M216

The Professional Reliance Act bill (M216) threatens to weaken the oversight of new home construction and increase the liability risk of taxpayers

A private member's bill that poses significant risks to new homeowners and taxpayers passed second reading earlier this week. Bill M216 – Professional Reliance Act, sponsored by NDP MLA George Anderson would remove the ability of local governments to review development proposals, and instead allow professionals hired by developers to certify their projects. The bill will now proceed to review by the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills. A [portal](#) is available for submissions to the committee. UBCM has asked the province to extend the period for input beyond the December 2 deadline. Local governments are encouraged to provide comments via the portal and communicate directly with MLA

George [Anderson](#), Minister Christine [Boyle](#), and Minister of State Brittney [Anderson](#). [Read more.](#)

In memoriam: Keith Thom

UBCM is sad to note the passing of Keith Thom, councillor and deputy mayor of Peachland.

“Keith was far more than a colleague – he was a dear friend, a steady presence, and a passionate ambassador for our town of Peachland. Over years of service – both on Council and in the community – he touched countless lives through his warmth, his music, his generous spirit, and his dedication,” wrote the mayor and councillors in a [statement](#).



At issue with the *Heritage Conservation Act*

Last week UBCM shared [feedback from our members](#) about proposed changes to the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Since then President Cori Ramsay has spoken to several reporters.

[Mark Page](#) highlighted some of the core questions that emerged from UBCM’s member consultation, particularly the Province’s stance that the new Act will not ‘necessarily’ apply to more properties. “But that doesn’t make sense to our members because if you’re expanding the concept of heritage, doesn’t this also expand the number of properties that are being included in this?” President Cori Ramsay asks.

[Vaughn Palmer](#) focused on the depth of input UBCM members had to offer on the proposed changes, despite the limited opportunities provided by the Province.

[Rob Shaw](#) reported on top line issues identified by UBCM members, and suggests the NDP is facing heightened opposition from the public and no longer has the political capital to forge ahead without support of local governments.

FUNDING

Funding available for climate resilience projects

Co-operators [Resilience Acceleration Lab](#) is inviting local governments to apply for funding to develop infrastructure projects that reduce physical climate risks, including flooding, wildfires, storms, and heat. The initiative aims to build community resilience, protect affordability and stimulate growth. Selected proposals may receive up to \$250,000 and expert guidance to prepare for private capital financing. Projects will be reviewed on a rolling basis until January 30, 2026.



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