

The Honourable Wab Kinew
Premier of Manitoba

Honourable Malaya Marcelino
Minister of Labour and Immigration and Minister responsible for The Workers Compensation Board

Honourable Tracy Schmidt
Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Efficiency Manitoba

Honourable Lisa Naylor
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services

Honourable Jamie Moses
Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources

Honourable Ian Bushie
Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations and Minister of Indigenous Economic Development

Honourable Adrien Sala
Minister of Finance, Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro and Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Service

Honourable Bernadette Smith
Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness and Minister responsible for Mental Health

Honourable Renée Cable
Minister of Advanced Education and Training

November 23, 2023

Dear Premier and Ministers,

On behalf of Sustainable Building Manitoba (SBM), I am writing to urge you to swiftly adopt higher energy-efficient building codes in Manitoba. Prioritizing the design and construction of high performance buildings immediately is crucial for the environment and integral to fostering resilient communities. Accelerating the implementation of codes aimed at achieving net zero is key to making Manitoba a leader in the low-carbon economy, mitigating rising costs including high Hydro bills, and ensuring no one is left behind.

This is a time sensitive issue. The 2020 Model Building Codes, effective January 1st 2024, include unambitious Tier 1 energy-efficient codes for residential and commercial buildings. Based on consultation and engagement with diverse building professionals across the sector regarding the tiers, SBM is recommending:

- swift transition to Tier 2 for NECB commercial buildings
 - Tier 4 represents net zero building for offices, condos etc.

- bypassing Tier 2 and advancing straight to Tier 3 for NBC Part 9 residential structures.
 - Tier 5 is net zero houses and smaller multi unit buildings

These codes are all designed to be steps towards building net zero buildings. Manitoba's Public Service is currently working to provide a pathway through the tiers as part of the strategy to meet provincial commitments to emission reductions and to meet Federal regulations including Manitoba's commitment to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

Adopting higher energy tiers in the 2020 Building Code is a win-win for the environment, the economy and for consumers. Higher performance buildings reduce energy consumption, emit fewer carbon emissions and demonstrate a commitment to future generations: the buildings built today will stand for decades to come. In addition, energy-efficient buildings are better equipped to withstand extreme weather events, and reduce the impact on infrastructure and emergency response systems as the impacts of climate change become more prevalent.

Building code adoption and progression towards net-zero, high performance new buildings is a multi-faceted task that touches nearly every portfolio in the provincial cabinet. Your government has the ability to make an impact now by accelerating the code adoption timeline, ensuring future construction of high performing, healthy energy efficient homes and buildings.

Impacts on ministerial portfolios include:

Labour and Immigration (Minister Marcelino)

- Create and protect workers' jobs that are resilient, well compensated positions in a green economy.
- Position Manitoba as a leader in green building practices and greenhouse gas reduction.
- Manitoba's leadership in sustainable building enhances affordability, economic resilience, and environmental responsibility.

Environment and Climate Change | Efficiency Manitoba (Minister Schmidt)

- Make Manitoba a leader in clean energy and helps your government take bold action when it comes to fighting the climate crisis
- Begin the journey towards meeting net-zero targets by 2050.
- Contributes to creating a net-zero energy grid by 2035

Transportation and Infrastructure | Consumer Protection and Government Services (Minister Naylor)

- Promote energy efficiency to extend the life of existing infrastructure.
- In the lower energy inefficient tiers, consumers are being sold an out-of-date product at move in date. For example, a homeowner buys the windows that come with their new home only to have to replace them long before their functional lifespan.

Economic Development | Investment | Trade | Natural Resources (Minister Moses)

- Contribute to the mandate of growing our economy with jobs in the skilled trades.
- Higher code tiers support economic development and safeguard jobs.

- Significantly to expand our clean energy economy through greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Contribute to the creation of 10,000 new jobs in the skilled trades over the next eight years.

Municipal and Northern Relations (Minister Bushie)

- Unique impacts within municipalities in terms of both code enforcement and cultivating resilient communities.
- Low energy-use policies are crucial for Northern Manitoba's energy security and an important step towards reconciliation.

Finance | Manitoba Hydro | Manitoba Public Service (Minister Sala)

- Acting promptly avoids unnecessary costs, and saves future generations and our province money
- Avoids unnecessary risks to future grid stability

Housing | Addictions | Homelessness (Minister Smith)

- Resolve the affordable housing crisis through energy-efficiency for long-term affordability.
- Energy efficient social housing will be healthier for residents and the environment, and much less expensive to operate than fossil-fueled equivalents

Advanced Education and Training (Minister Cable)

- Train workforce in energy efficiency for future economic needs.
- Foster a Centre of Excellence in education and training utilizing extreme temperature ranges in the province.

Your promise to install geothermal home energy is most welcome, however it is critical to remember that the first step to fuel switching is demand reduction, aka energy efficiency. Better building codes will help get you there!

Delaying high-performance code adoption will lead to expensive retrofits and elevated energy costs. Building best now is so important. SBM would love to discuss the significant, cross-sector and transdisciplinary impacts associated with an aggressive transition towards ambitious energy targets in our building sector. Please contact me at 204-995-5255 to schedule a meeting with myself, Board Chair Cindy Choy and Advocacy Chair Dudley Thompson.

We are pleased that you are a listening government! We expect that this advice from experts across the sector to accelerate the adoption of energy efficient building codes helps ensure that this issue receives the attention it merits.

Yours Sincerely,

Laura Tyler

Executive Director on behalf of the SBM Board of Directors and Membership

Cc Deputy Ministers

SBM Board Chair Cindy Choy & Advocacy Chair Dudley Thompson