

November 27, 2025

To: George.Anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Subject: City of Maple Ridge Input on Private Member's Bill M 216

Dear MLA Anderson,

Thank you for your email of November 14, 2025, regarding your Private Member's Bill M 216, the *Professional Reliance Act*. I am writing on behalf of the City of Maple Ridge to provide preliminary feedback and confirm that we will be sharing input through the consultation process established by the Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills.

We appreciate the intent behind your bill, particularly the goal of increasing certainty and predictability in development approvals. At the same time, we have significant concerns about how the legislation would operate in practice, the risks it creates for public safety and accountability, and the unintended consequences it may have for local governments and our shared goal of expanding the housing supply.

The City of Maple Ridge has exceeded our housing targets. We have been a constructive partner to your government and intend to continue working in collaboration with the Province. We take seriously our role in helping address the housing shortage. It is in that spirit that we are seeking clarification on several aspects of the bill and offering to work collaboratively with you and the legislative committee to explore alternative approaches and other adjustments.

City of Maple Ridge experience with professional reliance

In your [remarks online](#), Maple Ridge was referenced as a municipality that employs a professional reliance model. I would like to clarify that Maple Ridge does not use such a model. The City's Certified Professional Program is voluntary and applies only to building permit and occupancy approvals for large or complex buildings. It enables applicants to engage qualified architects or engineers to assist with Building Code compliance, coordination, and assurance. The City retains full authority over review and approval.



The program is not a substitute for municipal oversight and does not transfer responsibility for technical review to external professionals. The Planning Institute of BC recently described our program [in its letter to the Premier](#), noting its role in streamlining the process while ensuring the highest safety standards. Maple Ridge staff who led the introduction of the Certified Professional Program last year have deep expertise and would be pleased to support you or the legislative committee as subject matter experts.

Erosion of critical safeguards

We are concerned that Bill M 216 would prevent municipalities from conducting technical peer reviews of development applications and would require us to accept certifications from developer-hired professionals without independent verification.

Municipal review serves an important purpose. Our staff bring access to historical, technical, and environmental data relevant to Maple Ridge that external professionals do not have, and they apply a local lens to assessing cumulative impacts, neighbourhood context, and city-wide infrastructure considerations. Removing their ability to review submissions increases the risk of costly or dangerous impacts to homeowners and tenants.

Risk of slower approvals

Although we understand that the intent of the bill is to reduce red tape, we are concerned that it may instead result in slower approvals. At present, our staff work directly with applicants to resolve issues as they arise. Under Bill M 216, any disagreement would need to be appealed to the Office of the Superintendent for Professional Guidance. This centralization introduces a new bottleneck and additional bureaucracy.

In cases where City staff cannot verify the technical underpinnings of a proposal but are required to accept it, staff may have no choice but to recommend that Council refuse the application due to safety and liability concerns. This would impede our progress on delivering the new housing our community needs.

Cost implications for developers

The bill may also increase cost and complexity for developers. Without municipal peer review, cities would need to strengthen technical study requirements to cover all possible risk scenarios at the outset rather than assessing needs on a site-specific basis. This would require more extensive work from consultants, drive up costs, and lengthen timelines for applicants.



Liability and long-term risk

Finally, the bill leaves unresolved questions about liability. If defects are discovered years after occupancy, it is unclear who bears responsibility. Even if local governments are nominally shielded, municipalities can still be named in lawsuits. This creates financial risk for taxpayers, especially where professionals are unavailable, insolvent, or underinsured. This uncertainty erodes confidence in the long-term protection of residents and businesses.

Path forward

We recognize and respect the intent behind Bill M 216. We also see opportunities to collaborate on improvements that could advance provincial goals while maintaining the essential safeguards that ensure public safety, accountability, and efficient delivery of housing.

Maple Ridge would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or with the legislative committee to discuss our Certified Professional Program, our experience with streamlining approvals, and potential alternative approaches that may better achieve the outcomes you are seeking.

Thank you for your consideration. We remain committed to being a constructive partner to the Province and to supporting the delivery of safe, affordable, and well-planned housing in our rapidly growing community.

Sincerely,



Mayor, City of Maple Ridge

Cc:

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