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Canadian
Association
of Home &
Property
Inspectors (BC)

December 8th, 2008

Mayor Pamela Goldsmith-Jones and Members of Council
District of West Vancouver
750 — 17th Street
West Vancouver, BC V7V 3T3

Dear Mayor Goldsmith-Jones and Members of Council:

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors of British Columbia — CAHPI(BC) — I want to congratulate you on your success in the municipal election, and extend my best wishes for a productive term.

Since 2002, CAHPI(BC) has asked the BC government to support us in ensuring the highest standards for those seeking to call themselves home and property inspectors. Over 50 BC municipal councils have written to Premier Campbell asking him to introduce high standards to protect BC consumers from charlatans and con artists posing as qualified home inspectors.

In six years, five ministers have carried the file. Ministers Rich Coleman and John Les promised standards by the end of 2006. Yet today, in BC, anyone can still call themselves a home inspector with no training, no qualifications, no experience, and no accountability. Moreover, we have now learned from the current minister, Solicitor General John van Dongen, that in all these years, the Ministry has not even done a comparative analysis of existing standards in home inspection organizations operating in BC. How on earth can a ministry develop standards if it doesn't know what standards currently exist in BC? Surely that must be 'step one' in any legitimate licensing effort?

If the BC government *had* done a comparative analysis, it would show that CAHPI(BC) members study and train for an average three years and complete a required 250 inspections before achieving Registered Home Inspector (RHI) status, compared to one year and five inspections for members of the British Columbia Institute of Property Inspectors (BCIPI), and only *one day* and *no inspections* at all for members of the International Association of Certified Home Inspectors (InterNACHI).

#5 - 3304 Appaloosa Road
Kelowna, British Columbia
Canada V1V 2W5
Tel: 1-800-610-5665
Outside BC: (250) 491-3979
Fax: 1-866-405-9232
Outside BC: (250) 491-2285
www.cahpi.bc.ca

Only CAHPI(BC) makes continuing education mandatory for its inspectors.

Only CAHPI(BC) makes it mandatory for its members to carry Errors & Omissions Insurance and General Comprehensive Liability Insurance.

Only CAHPI(BC).

Minister van Dongen has rejected the idea of industry self-regulation, although he granted precisely that responsibility to the wildly controversial payday loan industry. He has told our members in 172 BC municipalities — men and women who are often the only qualified inspectors available to consumers in non-urban and rural areas — that they will have to pay fees to a bloated Victoria-based oversight agency created by the BC government, just to certify that the inspectors with BC's highest standards measure up to government's lower standards. Accordingly, CAHPI(BC) has advised the BC government that:

- It will not support low standards for home inspectors that mislead consumers;
- it will not direct its members to pay *any* licensing fee to subsidize the creation of *any* standards that do not *exceed* CAHPI's Registered Home Inspector designation. In British Columbia, it is the RHI distinction that is the measure of quality, training, and accountability that CAHPI (BC) members have spent years and many thousands of dollars to attain and maintain;
- in this time of economic crisis and fear, a blatant money grab from BC's highest-trained, highest-qualified home inspectors would be a stunning example of a government out of touch with BC small businesses, the BC communities in which they operate, and the BC consumers they serve; and,
- a practical, realistic, and affordable approach is simply to require those who wish to be accredited home inspectors in British Columbia to seek membership and standards accreditation from either of the two respected inspection organizations in BC. They are CAHPI(BC), which has the highest industry standards in the province, and the British Columbia Institute of Property Inspectors (BCIPI). While the BCIPI standards are lower than those of CAHPI(BC), BCIPI has committed to improving its standards in the very near future, which allows us to have this confidence in them.

These are hard times in many BC communities, and prospective homebuyers deserve real consumer protection when considering the largest purchase of their lives. Expensive government-built mediocre standards that protect those unwilling to become highly trained, highly qualified, and fully accountable cannot be in any community's interest.

If you believe the current and future homeowners of your community, and the qualified and trained home inspectors who serve them, deserve more than what the BC government is offering, I would encourage you to write to Premier Campbell and Minister van Dongen.

Urge Premier Campbell and Minister van Dongen to abandon their race-to-the-bottom for home inspection standards.

Tell Premier Campbell and Minister van Dongen that making business achieve only the lowest home inspection standards is not good enough for your community.

Remind them that small business is the backbone of your community, and that in good economic times, and especially in bad ones, it deserves better from the BC government than a thinly disguised cash grab.

Ask them to embrace an approach based on the highest standards for home inspectors, in a manner that does not penalize consumers looking to purchase a home in your community, or threaten to bankrupt the small businesses who serve them.

You can write to Premier Campbell and Minister van Dongen as follows:

The Honourable Gordon Campbell

Premier of British Columbia
Room 156 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
E-mail: premier@gov.bc.ca
Fax: (250) 387-0087

The Honourable John van Dongen

Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Room 236 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
E-mail: john.vandongen.mla@leg.bc.ca
Fax: (250) 356-8270

Please take a few moments to write to the Premier and Minister van Dongen to protect consumers and the small businesses in your community who serve them. On behalf of our members in communities across BC, I would be grateful to hear of your efforts on this matter.

Sincerely,



Owen Dickie, RHI, Lake Country
National Certificate Holder
President, CAIPI(BC)

On behalf of:

Vice President Chris Stockdale, RHI, Richmond
Treasurer Craig Hostland, RHI, NCH, Kelowna
Secretary Dan Brown, RHI, NCH, Chilliwack
Past President Bill Sutherland, RHI, NCH, Kamloops
Director Doug Brown, RHI, NCH, Blind Bay
Director Stephen Andrews, RHI, NCH, Prince George
Director Donald Ruggles, RHI, Victoria
Director Stewart Garrick, Cranbrook

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