



Canadian  
Association  
of Home &  
Property  
Inspectors (BC)

December 19<sup>th</sup>, 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 December 8<sup>th</sup> I wrote to you on behalf of the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors of British Columbia — CAHPI(BC). In our letter, we addressed our continuing concerns over BC government actions in supporting us in ensuring the highest standards for those seeking to call themselves home and property inspectors.

As well, we asked you to consider writing to Premier Gordon Campbell and Solicitor General John van Dongen. It was my hope that you would urge them to abandon their race-to-the-bottom for home inspection standards and embrace an approach based on the highest standards for home inspectors, and to do so in a way that does not penalize consumers looking to purchase a home in your community, or threaten to bankrupt the small businesses who serve them.

I am writing to you again because of the disturbing telephone call I received on December 17<sup>th</sup> from Solicitor General van Dongen.

Mr. van Dongen telephoned me to talk about our December 8<sup>th</sup> letter to you. He told me that this kind of letter — and presumably any response by you to him and the Premier as requested in the letter — would generate heat for him from his Cabinet colleagues, making it difficult for him to get Cabinet support for his proposal to set standards for those seeking to call themselves home and property inspectors.

I thought Mr. van Dongen's comment about his Cabinet colleagues odd.

Our organization has made it very clear to Mr. van Dongen that we take great issue with his relentless pursuit of mediocre home inspection standards. We have made very clear to him our concern over a cash grab authorized by his government from small businesses in the form of

licensing fees to be paid to a bloated Victoria-based oversight agency that his government created, all to certify that the inspectors with BC's highest standards — CAHPI(BC) members — measure up to government's low standards.

We would hope, therefore, that heat from his Cabinet colleagues is *precisely* what Mr. van Dongen would face, given the dangers to consumers inherent in his inspection-standards approach, especially in this time of economic crisis.

Mr. van Dongen also advised me that he was not worried about having to deal with municipalities on this matter. He advised that he would be sending a letter to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), and informed me he has a good working relationship with the UBCM, having contact with them all the time. Mr. van Dongen's comments left us with the impression that he has some relationship with the UBCM that we should interpret as an ability to stifle the voices of local government.

From Mr. van Dongen's comments, we are left to wonder if our December 8<sup>th</sup> letter to you will be to no avail. Will BC mayors and councils comply with a directive *not to write* to the Premier or Mr. van Dongen asking them to abandon their race-to-the-bottom for home inspection standards, or reminding them that small business deserves better from the BC government than a thinly disguised cash grab? That is the impression the Minister left with us.

We cannot speak to Mr. van Dongen's experience with BC mayors and councils, or the implication that they can be muzzled on what seem to be such basic consumer protection and small business fundamentals. We can, however, speak to our experience. And in our experience, when it comes to BC mayors and councils standing up for their communities, they do.

In 2006, when the BC government continued to drag its feet on this issue, we asked mayors and councils if they would consider writing to the Premier on behalf of people in their community making the biggest purchasing decision of their lives — the purchase of a home. We asked mayors and councils if they would take action with the BC government to ensure that when people in their communities sought out a home inspector to make sure their purchasing decision was an informed one, they could have confidence that any person calling themselves a home inspector was trained, qualified, and accountable. And over 50 mayors and councils wrote to the Premier and said exactly that.

And because of this experience with BC municipal leadership, we stand by our December 8<sup>th</sup> letter to you. We're not sure whose interests are being served when Mr. van Dongen worries that he might not be able to get his Cabinet colleagues to support low inspection standards on the backs of consumers and the small business people who serve them. But it's not the interests of consumers and small business in any BC community. Indeed, when Mr. van Dongen tells me, as he did during our conversation, that he wants me to call him before we write any letters in the future, we remain deeply concerned that the interests being served in his ministry's handling of this file are some distance from BC communities and the people who live and work 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.

Accordingly, as we wrote on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 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, we 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

We appreciate all your efforts to stand up for consumers and businesses in your community. And we believe that the Premier and Minister van Dongen need to hear your voices on this matter, too. Again, on behalf of our members in communities across BC, we would be grateful to hear of your efforts on this matter.

Sincerely,



Owen Dickie, RHI, Lake Country  
National Certificate Holder  
President, CAHPI(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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The Honourable Gordon Campbell, MLA, Premier of British Columbia  
 Carole James, MLA, Leader of the Official Opposition  
 John Winter, President & CEO, BC Chamber of Commerce  
 Ms. Diane Thorne, MLA, Opposition Critic for Housing and Consumer Affairs  
 Mike Farnworth, MLA, Opposition Critic for Public Safety and Solicitor General  
 Al Horning, MLA, *Kelowna-Lake Country*  
 The Honourable Linda Reid, MLA, *Richmond East*  
 John Les, MLA, *Chilliwack-Sumas*  
 The Honourable Kevin Krueger, MLA, *Kamloops-North Thompson*  
 Maurine Karagianis, MLA, *Esquimalt-Metchosin*  
 The Honourable Shirley Bond, MLA, *Prince George-Mount Robson*  
 The Honourable George Abbott, MLA, *Shuswap*  
 Corky Evans, MLA, *Nelson-Creston*  
 BC MLAs