

Dear Members of City Council,

Re: Support for Zero Carbon Development and Green Building Standards

We are writing on behalf of the Bay Area Climate Change Council (BACCC), a collective of organizations in the Hamilton-Burlington Bay Area committed to achieving a thriving and resilient net-zero Bay Area by 2050. Members of the Council and our implementation teams span the two cities and represent organizations in the non-profit, public, and private sectors, and include citizen and Indigenous representatives.

Greenhouse gas emissions from heating, cooling, and powering buildings in the City of Hamilton account for nearly 18% of our region's carbon pollution. A low carbon future for the Bay Area requires transitioning our existing buildings off of fossil fuels and undertaking deep energy retrofits on a massive scale. At the same time, we must build new buildings to achieve low emissions and high energy efficiency, ultimately ensuring net zero new developments – thereby avoiding costly retrofits in the immediate future.

Given the urgency and extent of the climate crisis, the City of Hamilton needs mandatory building development and performance standards aligned with the City of Hamilton's goal of net-zero by 2050. Building development and performance standards are policy tools taking root in municipalities across Canada,¹ and municipalities have the legal authority to implement them.² The City of Toronto, for example, has implemented tiered Green Standards that set minimum energy and emissions requirements for new developments, alongside financial incentives for the voluntary adoption of more ambitious energy efficiency and emissions limits. Ultimately, through its tiered system, the City of Toronto plans that all buildings constructed on or after 2030 will be at or near net zero.³ As with any policy development, we must ensure that new standards do not inadvertently create new or perpetuate existing inequalities within our communities; community consultation will be an important component of our policy development to ensure that future building development standards are fair and equitable.

The City of Hamilton has an opportunity to become a leader in green development, joining the growing momentum toward net zero development across North America. Our city already has many examples of new buildings achieving a passive or net zero standard, such as the Putnam Family YWCA (which received the [Passive House Building Certification](#)) and the Joyce Centre

¹ The Atmospheric Fund, *Building Performance Standards Primer* (2023)

https://taf.ca/custom/uploads/2023/10/TAF-BPS-Primer_202310.pdf

² Canadian Environmental Law Association, *Recommendations for Municipalities: Mandatory Building Performance Standards* (2023),

https://taf.ca/custom/uploads/2023/09/CELA-TAF-Legal-Review-MBPS_2023.pdf

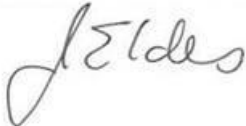
³ City of Toronto, *Toronto Green Standard* (n.d.),

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/toronto-green-standard/>

for Partnership and Innovation (which achieved the premiere [Zero Carbon Building](#) certification).⁴ Now is the time to build on these successes.

We believe that building development standards aligned with the City of Hamilton's net-zero targets are an important and promising tool for achieving our shared climate goals. BACCC is prepared to support the development of these standards, and we are looking forward to continuing this discussion in the near future.

Sincerely,



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⁴ Clean Air Partnership, *Towards Low Carbon Communities: Creating Municipal Green Development Standards* (2023),
<https://www.cleanairpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Final-CAP-Towards-Low-Carbon-Communities-2023-Update.pdf>