

February 6th, 2025

Submission to City of Hamilton General Issues Committee (Budget)
71 Main Street West, 1st Floor,
Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 4Y5
clerk@hamilton.ca

Re: Item 9.6 - Climate Change Initiative

We are writing to urge Hamilton’s General Issues Committee to vote against the motion (item 9.6) which would cut key climate change initiatives in the 2025 Budget. Climate change is an environmental crisis, but it is also an equity and health crisis. Hamilton has declared a climate emergency.¹ It is critical to move forward with initiatives to make Hamilton climate resilient as the harms from climate change continue to escalate.

We are particularly concerned about the motion to cut funding for the feasibility study for air conditioning in Hamilton Rental housing.

Hamilton’s Public Health Committee unanimously ratified Motion BOH23019 in 2023, which directed the Licensing and By-Law Services Division to create an information report for developing an adequate temperature by-law. The purpose of an adequate temperature by-law is to set a maximum standard of 26 degrees indoors in all rental units and to protect the most vulnerable tenants from the serious health risks of excessive heat indoors.

After the 2021 extreme heat event in British Columbia, the provincial government found that 98% of the 619 deaths occurred indoors.² Of these 619 people, 90% were over the age of 60. Most of the people who died did not have adequate cooling systems in their homes. Deaths were higher among those living in socially or materially deprived neighborhoods with poor-quality housing. Unhoused individuals and overall deprivation were also identified as risk factors for increased mortality rates.³

Subsequently, a report to the Chief Coroner of British Columbia explicitly identified high indoor temperatures as the primary cause of injury and death during this extreme heat event.⁴ This report goes on to state:

¹ City of Hamilton, “City of Hamilton Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan” at p 4, online (pdf): [Hamilton’s Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan | City of Hamilton](#)

² Government of British Columbia, “Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021” (June 7, 2022) at 5.

³ Government of British Columbia, “Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021” (June 7, 2022) at 17.

⁴ Government of British Columbia, “Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021” (June 7, 2022) at 22.

“During this time, hot air became trapped indoors and continued to rise over time. Although outdoor temperatures decreased overnight, residences did not cool off, exposing people to harmful high temperatures for extended periods of time. The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) identified that people were most in danger when indoor temperatures remained above 26 degrees throughout the heat event.”⁵

The feasibility study will provide technical information to expediate retrofits for different types of existing buildings which do not currently have mechanical cooling available to the tenants. It is urgent to tackle the issue of indoor heat and protect the health of tenants in Hamilton.

Yours Truly,



Jacqueline Wilson
Canadian Environmental Law Association

⁵ Government of British Columbia, “Extreme Heat and Human Mortality: A Review of Heat-Related Deaths in B.C. in Summer 2021” (June 7, 2022) at 22.