



File: 0400

January 13, 2026

The Honourable David Eby, Premier
The Honourable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Via email:

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RE: Bill M216 – Professional Reliance Act

On behalf of the Council of the District of Highlands, I am writing to express our strong concerns and opposition to Bill M216, the Professional Reliance Act.

While we understand and respect the Province's intention to improve efficiency in housing delivery and streamline development approvals, we are deeply concerned that Bill M216 significantly erodes municipal authority, compromises public accountability, and creates new risks and liabilities for local governments.

As written, the legislation would require local governments to accept submissions certified by registered professionals as meeting permit or bylaw requirements. This shifts decision-making power away from democratically accountable local governments and places it in the hands of private professionals whose primary obligations are to their clients rather than to the broader community. This change would diminish essential oversight by municipal planners, engineers, and building officials, whose deep knowledge of local context is vital to responsible land use and environmental stewardship.

Further, Bill M216 appears to bypass established municipal processes and may create regulatory deadlock, over-reliance on provincial dispute-resolution mechanisms, and heightened liability exposure for municipalities. These risks run counter to the principles of good governance and community-centered decision-making.



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We also share the serious concerns raised by many local governments regarding the lack of meaningful consultation. Bill M216 was introduced without substantive dialogue with municipalities or the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). Systemic legislative changes of this scale should be developed collaboratively to ensure feasibility, avoid unintended consequences, and respect the roles and responsibilities outlined in the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter*, and *Land Title Act*.

Municipal capacity is already strained as local governments work to implement significant recent provincial initiatives, including the *Housing Supply Act*, Bills 44 and 47 relating to small-scale multi-unit housing and transit-oriented development, and the *Infrastructure Projects Act*. Adding a transformative shift to professional-reliance approval processes—without consultation, technical engagement, or clear implementation pathways—will further challenge municipal operations and potentially delay critical housing and infrastructure projects.

The District of Highlands supports UBCM's call for the Province to pause consideration of Bill M216 and engage in thorough, good-faith consultation with local governments to explore more balanced and practical approaches. Any future changes to local approval processes must be transparent, evidence-based, and developed in collaboration with those who will be responsible for implementing them.

We respectfully urge the Province to listen to the collective voices of local governments across British Columbia and work together to strengthen—not diminish—the democratic, accountable, community-driven nature of local governance.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continued partnership with the Province on legislation and initiatives that support both housing goals and effective local governance.

Sincerely,



Ken Williams
Mayor, District of Highlands

cc:

- Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
- Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills
P.MBCcommittee@leg.bc.ca