



November 13, 2019

To: Deputy Mayor Ana Bailão, Chair, Planning & Housing Committee  
Members, Planning & Housing Committee

From: Daryl Chong, Greater Toronto Apartment Association

**Re: PH10.4 Amendments to Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings, and Progress Update on RentSafeTO**

The Greater Toronto Apartment Association (“GTAA”) represents the interests of the multi-family, purpose-built rental housing industry. Our members own and manage more than 150,000 units of multi-family, purpose-built rental housing in the GTA, mostly in the City of Toronto.

We closely monitored the unfortunate electrical incidents in St. James Town. We then initiated several meetings with the Electrical Safety Association (ESA), Toronto Fire Services (TFS) and Municipal Licensing & Standards (MLS) to better understand what happened and how we could prevent similar occurrences across the city.

GTAA Members are responsible operators that care about the safety and comfort of our residents and communities that we house. We participate in city led programs and have worked as partners on many initiatives with various city departments with shared goals.

Today’s recommendations do not reflect our previous discussions and consultations with City senior officials.

The requirement to display a copy of the evaluation document (1a.) does not serve residents. Categorizing and labelling families and children with a number, based on where they live, is a bad idea. A family’s decision to move, is not as simple as choosing a different restaurant.

Assessment process improvements have been made, but there is still some inconsistency. We would need an appeal or re-assessment process to correct any errors.

Regarding pest control (1.f.) there is no certificate that can be posted. All the products are approved by Health Canada for use and are applied by Provincially (Ministry of the Environment) certified technicians. Providing details would identify specific residents, and this privacy disclosure was previously determined to be unwanted. The ‘schedule’ is affected by a multitude of factors such as weather and is seasonal. Treatment timelines are already prescribed in the existing Bylaw.

Our main objection is recommendation 2 which seeks to add a new fee in Chapter 441, Fees and Charges.

*PH5.6 Vital Service Disruptions in Apartment Buildings (April 2019)* report included a “Tools for Enforcement and Cost Recovery” section which detailed several regulatory tools. It stated,

*City staff will explore the options that the City has to recover costs from building owners/operators, specifically in cases where the evacuation and relocation of tenants is the result of negligence of the landlord. The nature of a potential cost recovery tool will be assessed, including determining the length of time for which the City would seek to recover costs, and the impact on housing affordability.*

Today's report does not provide any analysis of the exploration of all the options. The option to pursue landlords for costs incurred by the City for choosing to accommodate displaced tenants is something that we urge the City to consider in more detail and to report back as part of a broader 'options report'; as indicated in April 2019.

The approach also provides no details on how the charges will be applied. There is no determination of 'fault'. The City is perhaps overlooking the circumstance where 'a substantial portion of a building becomes uninhabitable' as a direct result of a tenant's accidental or purposeful actions. A few years ago, a lit cigarette butt was tossed from an apartment balcony and it landed on flammable material stored by a hoarder on a balcony below, which caused a large fire and dehousing many neighbouring families. We do not believe it is appropriate for the City to require landlords to pay for the mistakes of tenants.

When Chapter 354 Apartment Building bylaw amendments were recommended earlier this year, we supported the changes. We went further by creating a series of best practices to help guide apartment building owners and operators. MLS reviewed GTAA's suggestions and gave us approval to proceed. We distributed information and hosted education seminars led by Licensed Electrical Contractors that specialize in apartment buildings. We, more than anyone else, do not want to go through a building closure.

Today's recommendations appear to have dismissed our previous efforts to work as partners with the City.

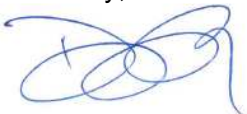
Thirty percent of Toronto's residents live in apartment buildings registered with the City. GTAA Members provide much of this housing. We have valuable experience and expertise to share. We should certainly be part of the discussion before landing on recommendations that affect how we operate.

At a time when Toronto is working very hard to encourage new rental supply, the recommendations work to the contrary.

When Toronto is working hard to preserve affordability, the recommendations work to the contrary.

Respectfully, the Greater Toronto Apartment Association requests that you **defer any decision today and engage in consultation with rental housing providers to determine the best way to proceed**. We want to be part of the solution.

Sincerely,



Daryl Chong  
President & CEO  
Greater Toronto Apartment Association