



**September 20, 2023**

Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2

**RE: 2023 IE6.4 - Update on the Net Zero Buildings Strategy and Implementation of Mandatory Emissions Performance Standards**

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

**Toronto Environmental Alliance strongly supports the proposed plan to implement Mandatory Emissions Performance Standards for buildings in Toronto.**

Implementing building emissions performance standards is a vital step in meeting Toronto's TransformTO targets, and one of the most important commitments in Toronto's list of climate actions to complete by 2025. Nearly 60% of the city's community emissions originate from buildings – primarily through the burning of fossil gas (aka natural gas).

Meeting Toronto's climate goals will mean retrofitting an average of 27,000 homes and buildings every year until 2040. The current pace of retrofits is far lower, meaning a strong and consistent regulatory framework will be necessary to drive further activity and meet our climate commitments.

Emissions Performance Retrofit (EPR) standards for buildings are increasingly common in municipalities and other jurisdictions across North America. New York, Vancouver, and several US counties and states have already implemented building energy and/or emissions standards for buildings.

Not only will retrofitting buildings benefit our climate and increase occupant health and comfort, Mandatory Emissions Performance Standards will also create more green jobs. The City of Toronto's 2021 Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy states that retrofitting Toronto's buildings could add \$140 billion in local economic activity and create an estimated 8500 direct, full-time retrofit jobs over the next 25 years.

**As Toronto prepares for the implementation of widespread climate retrofits, particular care must also be taken to ensure protection for renters.**

While climate retrofits generally save on building operating costs up to 30%, some landlords in the city have already used the up front costs of green retrofits to apply for Above Guideline Rent Increases (or AGIs), even when receiving government and/or grant funding for this work. Landlords have used disruptive construction techniques and schedules to induce existing tenants to move, knowing that they are legally able to significantly raise rents when there is tenant turnover. **In proceeding with regulations and standards for buildings, the City of Toronto must do everything within its jurisdictional power to prevent these regulations (and the retrofits they induce) from displacing tenants. This must be done in consultation with tenants and tenants' rights organizations.**

Nearly 50% of Torontonians are renters, and if implemented with careful consideration to tenant protections, this can be an important opportunity to drive measures that improve the quality of rental housing and tenants' health and wellbeing.

**TEA strongly recommends that City Staff research and report on mechanisms that could help to protect tenants from unethical retrofit practices, displacement, and unreasonable cost increases related to Emissions Performance Standards, including but not limited to:**

- **Protecting tenants from Above Guideline Rent Increases (AGIs)**
- **Protecting tenants from unreasonable construction practices**
- **Compensating tenants for disruptions as a result of retrofits**
- **Preventing penalties or fines levied against landlords to be passed on to tenants**

TEA also strongly recommends that this task not be limited to Environment and Climate Division staff, but that multiple City divisions with expertise in tenant protections including the Housing Secretariat and SDFA work together to inform a report outlining possible options.

Many jurisdictions have bylaws and programs designed to protect tenants from needed retrofits and upgrades for energy, climate, and seismic reasons. These include the cities of New York and Los Angeles. TEA encourages City Council and City Staff to research and identify what legal mechanisms and policies are available to ensure tenants are protected from landlords attempting to profit from climate retrofits.

In conclusion, the Toronto Environmental Alliance strongly supports Mandatory Emissions Performance Standards on buildings across the city, and agrees with the implementation timeline proposed by staff. TEA also strongly recommends that the City of Toronto undertake a report on policies that could protect tenants from unfair retrofit practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'How-Sen Chong', with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

How-Sen Chong  
Climate Campaigner  
Toronto Environmental Alliance