



December 4, 2024

TO: Planning and Housing Committee
City of Toronto
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Committee Members,

**Re: Item PH17.5 - Establishing a Framework to Address Excessive Indoor Temperatures in Leased Residential Premises
Planning and Housing Committee
Date: December 5, 2024**

I am writing on behalf of Scarborough Community Legal Services to express our strong support for by-law amendments that implement a maximum indoor temperature of 26 degrees Celsius for leased residential premises and cooling rooms in the City of Toronto. This is a critical step in protecting vulnerable people who are at heightened risk of heat-related illness and death, especially in the face of increasingly severe heatwaves due to climate change. We kindly request that you distribute this letter to the members of the Planning and Housing Committee.

Scarborough Community Legal Services is a community legal clinic that serves low-income residents of East Scarborough. We provide free legal services in the areas of housing, social assistance, employment and immigration. Each year, we assist almost 2500 tenants in our community with housing related matters, most of whom are vulnerable and precariously housed.

As you are aware, Toronto has experienced rising temperatures over the past several years, with heatwaves becoming more frequent and intense. Vulnerable tenants - particularly the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living in poverty - are disproportionately affected by extreme heat. Many of these individuals cannot afford air conditioning or do not have access to cooling systems in their apartment buildings. Without proper cooling, tenants are exposed to dangerous heat, which can lead to dehydration, heat stroke, respiratory distress, and even death.

Unfortunately, there are currently no legal requirements for landlords to provide cooling solutions for their tenants. The absence of such requirements leaves many tenants living in unsafe conditions during hot weather, which could be easily remedied with minimal investment in cooling infrastructure. While some buildings may provide air conditioning or cooling systems it is not mandated, and many residents, especially those living in older buildings, are left vulnerable during the summer months.

The impact of extreme heat is not only a matter of health but also of social justice. Tenants who are already struggling financially cannot be expected to shoulder the burden of purchasing, maintaining, and paying for the use of air conditioning systems. This creates an inequity, as those most in need of relief are left with no reasonable cooling solutions.



Scarborough
Community
Legal Services

By implementing a by-law requiring landlords to provide the necessary infrastructure to maintain indoor temperatures at or below 26 degrees Celsius, we can ensure that all Torontonians, regardless of income, age, or ability, have access to safe living conditions during the hottest months. This measure would not only save lives but also demonstrate Toronto's commitment to protecting its most vulnerable residents.

We urge this Committee and the City of Toronto to champion this vital initiative and move quickly to introduce a by-law amendment that sets out a maximum indoor temperature of 26 degrees Celsius for leased residential premises and cooling rooms. This is a step forward in safeguarding public health, reducing heat-related mortality, and ensuring that our city remains livable for all its residents. Additionally, this process should not be slowed by unnecessary delays as the health and safety of vulnerable residents cannot afford to wait.

We look forward to working with this Committee and the City as you take meaningful action to address the growing risks posed by extreme heat.

Sincerely,
SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renee Griffin".

Renee Griffin
Executive Director

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