

# Issue Update

## SAFER AND GREENER BUILDINGS COMING TO B.C.

On March 10, 2008 the B.C. Government introduced changes creating safer buildings and a greener B.C. Building Code. This is the beginning of a Modernization Strategy that will roll out in phases over the next several years as individual components are completed and implemented. Initial changes have begun with the introduction of [Bill 10](#), The Housing Statutes Amendment Act, which has received first and second reading. This amendment package makes changes to several key pieces of legislation related to the construction sector.

Bill 10 ensures we can construct greener buildings and respond to rapidly changing building technology. It is an important first step in improving the way we regulate buildings and construction. Bill 10 amends the Local Government Act, Community Charter, Vancouver Charter, Architects Act and the Engineers and Geoscientists Act. These amendments:

- \* Allow local governments to make bylaws to conserve energy and water, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve building accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- \* Introduce the use of building specialists trained in new and more complex building technologies such as rain screen and green building techniques. Professional associations that govern engineers, geoscientists and architects will have authority to create building specialist designations and determine the level of knowledge needed for certification as a specialist.
- \* Permit the Minister responsible for Housing to designate an official to make binding interpretations of the B.C. Building Code. This will add clarity and lead to more consistent application of the Code.

From the industry perspective the addition of the permission to allow the Minister to designate someone to make binding Building Code interpretations is of great significance. The industry has been requesting the replacement of this support service since it was discontinued by the Building Policy Branch over a decade ago. The timing for implementation of the service is unknown at this time.

Although the inception of amendments that have been introduced to allow local governments to make bylaws may appear to be onerous, it does not permit them to make technical changes. Technical changes are still required to be dealt with by concurrent authority under the Community Charter. The Ministry's Building and Safety Policy Branch, Office of Housing and Construction Standards should be notified where it appears changes are being made to technical requirements that do not meet the Building Code requirements.

Further information regarding the bill and questions related to this bill, can be viewed at the following links: <http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/modernization/index.htm> and <http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/modernization/faq.htm>