



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **BC CADE says North Cowichan's move to reverse previous renewable natural gas and natural gas effective ban paves the way for more affordable housing and reduced construction costs**

**VANCOUVER** – The BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy is applauding North Cowichan Council's decision to make it easier to build affordable housing in the municipality. The move will ease unnecessarily strict home heating regulations, creating more affordable homes and lowering building costs, while lessening BC's reliance on imported electricity.

Director of the BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy Bill Tieleman says North Cowichan's decision to reverse adopting high levels of BC's Zero Carbon Step Code in advance of the province doing so is a step in the right direction and hopes other municipalities follow suit.

"Effectively banning renewable natural gas and natural gas as a form of heating for new construction of homes and businesses simply doesn't make sense," said Tieleman. "The province implemented a phased approach for a reason."

"Resetting the emissions level at EL-1 allows developers and contractors to construct new buildings with the appropriate source of heating, resulting in lower costs, crucial as the province continues to face an affordability crisis," Tieleman said.

"Overturning a bad policy that put ideology before affordable homes and dependable energy was the right move for North Cowichan," says Councillor Bruce Findlay, who moved the motion to reverse the adoption of the Zero Carbon Step Code's highest level. "With an affordability crisis and BC Hydro importing over \$1.4 billion of electricity from the United States and Alberta in 2024, now is not the time to be banning alternate forms of heating such as renewable natural gas and natural gas."

North Cowichan's emission regulations were some of the most severe in the province at Zero Carbon Step Code Emissions Level 4 (EL-4) – or zero-carbon emissions from new builds. This motion brings the municipality in line with the province's standards of Emissions Level 1 (EL-1), which requires new builds to measure and report emissions, rather than ban them completely.

North Cowichan is one of more than 160 municipalities in BC operating under a patchwork quilt of energy regulations that homebuilders must navigate from one town to the next.

David Van Deventer, Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce president, told North Cowichan Council at their June 18 meeting that: "Different energy regulations from municipality to municipality means an uncertain regulatory climate and works against construction companies

offering new builds at reasonable costs. Nobody benefits when there is such a disconnect between jurisdictions.”

Tieleman says all BC residents deserve to have a choice when it comes to how they heat their homes.

“The consumer carbon tax was eliminated by BC and the federal government a few months ago and North Cowichan’s motion means those buying new homes will continue to have access to even more affordable natural gas heating,” said Tieleman. “There is nothing stopping developers from switching to electric heat if they choose but the ultimate decision comes down to home buyers.”

“There is already a tremendous demand for electricity in this province before we even consider the amount of electricity needed for new builds under EL-4. For the past two years, BC Hydro has had to import electricity to meet this demand, making the idea of banning natural gas and renewable natural gas in new builds even more absurd,” Tieleman added. “The province should be focusing on reducing dependency on external energy suppliers, rather than encouraging municipalities to impose unnecessary regulations that do nothing but drive up costs for consumers.”

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### **Background**

The BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy [BC CADE] is a coalition bringing together businesses, business organizations, labour unions, and others to support choice on affordable, dependable energy. Coalition members include:

- BC Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business – BC Branch
- Surrey Board of Trade
- Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
- Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada
- BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association
- Restaurants Canada
- BC Craft Brewers Guild
- BC Asian Restaurant Cafe Owners Association
- International Union of Electrical Workers Local 213
- UA Local 170
- BC Building Trades
- Mott Electric

- Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating
- The Limona Group
- South Asian Business Association
- Northwest Stoves
- Align West Homes
- Alliance of Beverage Licensees BC
- Concorde Distributing
- Jackson Grills
- Ready Propane
- Napoleon Grills & Fireplaces
- Continental Fireplaces & HVAC
- Valor Radiant Gas Fireplaces
- Pioneer Fireplace
- Maxquip
- Regency Fireplace Products
- Heat Savers
- Burden Propane
- Urban Fireplaces
- Quadra Homes
- Isle of Mann Property Group