

## **Formal Comment Submission: ERO 026-0300 Regarding Schedules 1, 2 and 7 of Bill 98, the Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026**

**Date:** May 14th, 2026

**To:** Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

**From:** Bay Area Climate Change Council (BACCC)

The Bay Area Climate Change Council (BACCC) serves as a collective impact initiative dedicated to catalyzing climate action within the cities of Hamilton and Burlington. BACCC's goal is for the Hamilton-Burlington Bay Area to achieve net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

Throughout 2025, BACCC worked extensively with diverse local stakeholders, from builders to grassroots environmental organizations, to build consensus around the critical enabling steps to accelerate low carbon, affordable and resilient new development in our region. The insights and recommendations from this working group are contained in two public reports, [Driving Decarbonization: The Role of GDS in Hamilton and Burlington](#), and its corresponding [Summary Report & Recommendations](#). Our view was that municipalities would play a critical role, including through the use of Green Development Standards (GDS).

If [Bill 98](#) is passed, prohibiting municipalities from enforcing their own mandatory GDS, the Province must accelerate its efforts to enable low carbon, affordable, and resilient development, in collaboration with municipalities and local communities. To that end, we highlight three key recommendations emerging from our work that are essential to lead the building sector to a net zero carbon future.

### **For Housing To Be Affordable In The Long Term, It Must Be Energy Efficient**

In the pursuit of policy and programs designed to improve access to affordable housing, it is essential that affordability is viewed more broadly than by purchase price alone. Operating costs like utility bills, deep energy retrofits, insurance premiums, and exposure to disruptions from weather events and power outages should all be factored into how we view the cost of housing.

At the same time, it is essential to have targeted interventions and incentives to ensure that any extra upfront costs for improved building performance does not translate into higher costs for those who are already economically vulnerable.

## **Align Ontario's Building Code With National Model Code Performance Tiers**

The Province of Ontario has committed to harmonizing with the National Model Building Code (NMBC), which includes tiered standards for energy performance. The 2025 National Model Code has been released, and it is time for Ontario to harmonize with it.

Tiered standards would enable a consistent provincial framework while enabling municipal ambition and innovation. The tiers are essential to ensure that builders in Ontario have clarity and predictability alongside modern and competitive minimum standards. At the same time, within a Province-wide framework, municipalities could be empowered to collaborate with local developers to adopt higher performance tiers based on their own climate action plans and local market conditions, like the British Columbia Step Code process.

Inaction will leave new homeowners facing [costly retrofits](#), higher energy bills, and increasing climate-related risks. Homes built to outdated standards expose residents to extreme heat, flooding, poor air quality, and other hazards.

## **Ensure Meaningful Incentives to Accelerate Action**

In order to expand the high-performance building sector, the Province must pair its regulatory authority with public funding and strategic incentivization programs. Designing incentives for new construction projects that meet specified energy efficiency standards can provide the necessary financial levers for developers and homeowners to bridge the upfront capital gap of high-efficiency construction.

Enabling the housing sector and broader economy to build for the future requires a comprehensive strategy that derisks the transition to high-efficiency standards. By incentivizing developers to build to smart, modern standards today, the Province can foster a housing sector capable of delivering the high-efficiency housing stock essential for long-term affordability.