

Matthew Green, Infrastructure and Environment Committee Secretariat  
10<sup>th</sup> floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON  
[iec@toronto.ca](mailto:iec@toronto.ca) / tel.: 416-397-4592

June 30, 2021.

### IE23.1 Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy

Dear Infrastructure and Environment Committee Members,

***The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) strongly supports the adoption of the Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy.*** The actions outlined in the proposed Strategy are fundamentally important in ensuring Toronto achieves its 2030 and 2050 climate targets as detailed in Transform TO and the City's Climate Emergency Declaration. Without this Strategy to reduce emissions from existing buildings, the City will be unable to achieve these targets.

In 2018, 59% of carbon emissions in Toronto came from buildings (primarily from natural gas use), making existing buildings the City's largest single source of emissions<sup>1</sup>. This means that retrofitting existing buildings to be more energy efficient is crucial if Toronto is to achieve its climate targets and reduce the City's carbon emissions. These goals will only be achieved if the City moves towards **stronger policy tools**, such as the Strategy's proposal to introduce mandatory requirements in the medium and long-term. The strategy will be instrumental in ensuring existing buildings in Toronto get the retrofits and upgrades they need to be more energy efficient and climate friendly.

The Strategy proposes an important pathway to improving energy efficiency in existing buildings, including establishing requirements for annual emissions disclosure for buildings and determining emissions performance targets. The Strategy also outlines steps towards fostering market transformation, as well as measures to make building retrofits more accessible and affordable to Torontonians.

Further, the Strategy will provide a number of co-benefits for citizens, including a boost to economic opportunities and job creation, and improvements to resident well-being and comfort. It is estimated that the implementation of the Strategy will create a net increase of over 420 million person-hours of employment by 2050, equivalent to 7000 full time jobs for the next 30 years<sup>2</sup>.

Implementing this strategy will also be essential to public health and resilience in the face of a changing climate. Extreme heat is already causing an average of 120 premature deaths in this City each and every year, and this number is expected to double by 2050 without strong action.

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<sup>1</sup> [Carbon Emissions Inventory for the GTHA 2018, February 2021.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [City of Toronto Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy Impact Modeling & Assessment Technical Appendix](#)

Retrofit measures such as improving building envelopes and installing heat pumps greatly reduce exposure to extreme heat and will ensure Torontonians have a safe and comfortable refuge during increasingly frequent and severe heat waves<sup>3</sup>.

We also want to recognize that the City of Toronto consulted with a large and multi-sectoral advisory committee in developing this strategy and included stakeholder feedback in the recommendations. The advisory committee – including representation from building owners and operators, architects and engineers, labour, academia and more – met regularly over the course of two years to help develop and refine the Strategy.

In conclusion, the importance of moving the Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy forward cannot be overstated, as it provides a critical pathway towards achieving Toronto’s net zero goals. Without retrofitting and upgrading existing buildings at scale, Toronto will not achieve its 2030 and 2050 climate targets. Therefore, ***we recommend the committee adopt the Net Zero Strategy for Existing Buildings, including all the staff recommendations.***

Sincerely,

Bryan Purcell, VP of Policy and Programs  
The Atmospheric Fund

## About the Atmospheric Fund

The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) is a regional climate agency that invests in low-carbon solutions for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and helps scale them up for broad implementation. Please note that the views expressed in this submission do not necessarily represent those of the City of Toronto or other GTHA stakeholders. We are experienced leaders and collaborate with stakeholders in the private, public and non-profit sectors who have ideas and opportunities for reducing carbon emissions. Supported by endowment funds, we advance the most promising concepts by investing, providing grants, influencing policies and running programs. We’re particularly interested in ideas that offer benefits in addition to carbon reduction such as improving people’s health, creating local jobs, boosting urban resiliency, and contributing to a fair society.

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<sup>3</sup> [Reducing Health Risk from Extreme Heat in Apartment Buildings](#)