

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada

Office of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street

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CC: The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Environment and Climate Change

CC: The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Natural Resources

CC: The Honourable Ahmed Hussen P.C., M.P.

Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

CC: The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc P.C., M.P.

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities

November 5, 2021.

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On behalf of The Atmospheric Fund (TAF), I wish to congratulate you and your team on a successful election campaign. We look forward to working with you and your government over the coming months to advance Canada's climate goals, particularly related to the building sector.

Buildings account for 43% of greenhouse gas emissions in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)¹ and are the third highest source of emissions in Canada². As such, we were pleased to see that your election platform included commitments and funding to reduce emissions from buildings. **The Atmospheric Fund is keen to provide expertise and support on the development and implementation of the Government's proposed National Net-Zero Emissions Building Strategy.**

We also suggest the below recommendations to ensure these commitments are as effective as possible.

Include commitments in the budget

We urge your government to implement the Liberal Party of Canada platform measures to reduce building emissions as soon as possible, particularly the net-zero emissions strategy, and the commitment to investing \$250 million to help low-income Canadians switch from oil-powered home-heating. We hope to see these commitments included in the Spring 2022 Budget. Significant funding commitments are required so Canadians can get to work on large-scale emissions reductions of the building stock.

Ensure new affordable housing is net-zero ready

As you write the new mandate letters for Cabinet, we urge you to coordinate climate action with efforts to tackle Canada's growing housing crisis. We support your government's platform commitment to build and revitalize 1.4 million homes by 2026, and we urge you to ensure that all federally supported housing projects are designed to be net-zero ready. Residents and housing providers will save on

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

²[Greenhouse gas sources and sinks: executive summary 2021.](#)

energy costs and won't be on the hook for unnecessary retrofits as energy requirements evolve. This investment would carry spinoff benefits for health and resilience, and present a significant opportunity for market development, generating specialized industry experience in building net-zero ready homes.

Advance the national building code by assigning a responsible Minister

We recognize the Liberal platform included a commitment to accelerate the adoption of the national net-zero emissions model building code for 2025. This goal is also outlined in Canada's current climate plan³. A renewed commitment is critical, given that an update to the new building construction code is years behind schedule. Moreover, the draft version fell short of net-zero energy ready standards and failed to take carbon emissions into account.

Additionally, the Joint Task Force on development of a retrofit code has indicated it does not intend to finalize the proposed code until 2030⁴, a full eight years behind the schedule established in the Pan-Canadian Framework.

There is a clear disconnect regarding this issue. To resolve confusion and inertia relating to building codes, **we recommend assigning a Minister to take responsibility of updating National Model Codes in the mandate letters**. Without rapidly updated codes, Canada won't be able to ensure existing buildings are retrofitted at the rate necessary to reduce emissions from buildings and achieve our climate targets⁵.

Support communities to scale up building retrofits

We support your election platform commitment to launch a community-led net-zero homes initiative, modelled after the Dutch "Energiesprong" program, and encourage your government to follow through on this commitment as soon as possible. Furthermore, to ensure the benefits of housing-focused programs are accessible to more Canadians, we urge this program to include not just single-family homes, but also multi-family and high-rise buildings, which house the majority of low-income urban residents in Canada.

Ultimately, we agree that addressing emissions from Canada's homes and buildings can benefit all Canadians. What we need now is immediate action for the climate to create good jobs, improve health, and make energy bills more affordable. We hope to see these excellent policies and programs implemented as quickly as possible.

Congratulations again, and we look forward to working with your government.

Yours sincerely,



Bryan Purcell
VP of Programs & Policy

The Atmospheric Fund

³ [A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy, 2020.](#)

⁴ [We need a national retrofit code sooner, rather than later, September 2021.](#)

⁵ [Making the case for better building code adoption, 2021.](#)