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Fazil Mihlar  
Deputy Minister, Climate Leadership  
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Province of British Columbia

**BOMA BC Briefing Note: Addressing Affordability in the Built Environment**

BOMA BC (est. 1911) is the premier commercial real estate industry association in BC and represents more than 250 million square feet of real estate where British Columbians go to work every day. For more than a decade BOMA BC has lead the way in sustainability for the built environment and through the creation of innovative solutions to industry needs (e.g., BOMA BEST) we have consistently been effective at creating real change in the operation and management of buildings. The result of which has been reduced Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG), reduced capital and operational cost, improved rental affordability, better educated building managers and operators, healthier buildings and happier building occupants.

The current need that we are seeing in our industry, and one we feel the provincial government may also be interested in pursuing, is the need to address concerns around rental affordability, both in terms of commercial and residential rental. Affordability impacts businesses looking for office space as well as people looking for residential rentals. We see B and C class buildings and small businesses as being particularly vulnerable when it comes to affordability issues. We recommend intervention be focused on conservation and sustainability programs and services which will reduce capital and operational costs of buildings which will reduce utility fees and rental rates. By approaching affordability through conservation we will also see gains in another area of great concern to both our industry and the Province, the reduction of GHGs. Current programs being offered to our industry through utilities are very difficult for the owners and managers of B and C class buildings to benefit from and these are the buildings that most small businesses occupy.

BOMA BC is being asked by our industry to support efforts to address affordability however with our limited resources we are not in a position to properly address the issue alone. We are asking the Provincial government to partner with BOMA BC to implement these increasingly critical programs (see reverse for brief outline of programs) to ensure our province remains competitive and affordable for everyone.

### **Solutions Currently Identified:**

- Energy Audits
  - It is critical to conduct energy audits to identify opportunities and educate building management
  - Often there is a lag (1-3+ years) between audit and implementation due to required planning and budgeting
  
- Project Implementation Assistance
  - Direct assistance will be the necessary to ensure building owners/managers are able to understand and complete conservation projects
  - Part of the education process for owner/managers is to quantify the savings achieved through conservation and how that can be used to reduce or stabilize rental rates
  
- Education
  - Energy training and educational seminars that focus on the topics of building operation and maintenance, conservation initiatives, and solutions to affordability issues
  
- Environmental Programs
  - Promotion of continuous Improvement Certification Programs – i.e. BOMA BEST
  - Waste Management, Water, Hazardous Materials, Indoor Air Quality
  - Energy tracking, monitoring, verification software
  - Tenant engagement

BOMA believes we are well positioned to affect further transformation of the commercial real estate industry and is seeking government support to help implement these critical programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,



Paul LaBranche

President – Building Owners and Managers Association of British Columbia