

November 7, 2025

To: Premier David Eby and Honorable Members of the Legislative Assembly

Re: An Open Letter to the Government of British Columbia - Urging Restraint on Bill M216, the Professional Reliance Act

We are a Metro Vancouver region-based group of urbanists, urban planners, architects, and UBC/SFU academics, most with decades of experience, some with a background in development, who have joined together to broaden the search for enduring housing solutions.

We are writing to you to address our concerns about [Bill M216](#), the Professional Reliance Act, that was recently introduced to the provincial legislature on [October 21, 2025](#) as a member's bill.

A Quiet Revolution in Local Governance: There is a quiet revolution underway in British Columbia—one that few citizens, and perhaps even few councillors, have yet noticed. With the introduction of Bill M216, the Professional Reliance Act, the provincial government is edging closer to a full-scale assumption of municipal planning powers, effectively rewriting the relationship between local democracy and development.

A Technical Bill with Profound Consequences: At first glance, the bill appears technical: a procedural adjustment to allow developers to hire certified professionals (“PGAs”) to review and approve projects. That may sound harmless, even efficient. Yet beneath its bureaucratic language lies a profound shift. Developers would be able to bypass municipal oversight, relying instead on provincially certified agents whose work local governments could not “peer review” (outside consultants) without provincial permission.

Part of a Broader Pattern of Provincial Overreach: This is not an isolated reform. As others have pointed out, Bill M216 builds upon a continuum of provincial interventions—Bills 44, 47, (2023) 13, and 15 (2024)—that expand provincial control over zoning and approvals, especially around transit corridors. Those laws already permit the province to dictate densities, override official community plans, and issue development permits directly if a city fails to comply. Bill M216 goes even further, embedding these powers in a professional governance framework that replaces local accountability with a provincially managed technocracy.

Institutionalizing Conflict of Interest: Even more troubling, this model institutionalizes conflict of interest. When certified professionals hired by developers are empowered to approve the very projects from which they earn their income, the integrity of the system collapses. The bill also eliminates the hard-won practice of incentivizing better urbanism through locally negotiated, taxpayer-informed zoning processes.

For decades, municipalities have used discretionary tools—community amenity contributions, design panels, and density bonusing—to secure parks, childcare facilities, and affordable housing. Bill M216 dismantles that tradition, substituting the private judgment of consultants for the collective will of local citizens.

Eroding Municipal Self-Determination: The bill’s provisions go so far as to allow the province to designate an alternative “local government” to handle approvals if an elected council proves too slow or resistant. This power effectively nullifies the principle of municipal self-determination.

Centralization Without Affordability: The pattern is unmistakable. Step by step, the tools of local planning—zoning, permitting, and density decisions—are being centralized under provincial authority, justified by the widely felt urgency of the housing crisis. Yet removing democratic checks does not guarantee affordability. On the contrary, it risks handing over unprecedented control to private actors and provincially appointed officials—for no discernible benefit and at great expense to the public good.

Lack of Transparency and Accountability: Equally concerning is how this legislation has been introduced. Instead of coming through the Minister of Housing or Municipal Affairs, Bill M216 arrived as a Private Member's Bill, tabled by an NDP MLA from Nanaimo. Substantive policy legislation is rarely advanced this way. The approach raises serious questions about transparency and accountability, especially given the sweeping implications for local democracy.

A Call for Democratic Restraint: We therefore urge restraint. Pause the progression of Bill M216. We note significant concerns also raised by the [Union of BC Municipalities](#) (UBCM). Engage municipalities, planning and design associations, and the public in a transparent review of how best to balance efficiency with democratic accountability.

In this tumultuous world, British Columbia should strengthen its reputation as a creative democracy, not weaken it.

Signed: (In alphabetical order on two pages below)

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Mike Mangan, Barrister & Solicitor (Ret.), who worked with the real estate industry for many years, authored *The Condominium Manual* and taught at UBC for 25 years.

Signers Continued:

Darlene Marzari, first a Social Planner at City of Vancouver, fought the Freeway to save Chinatown/Gastown/ waterfront, City of Vancouver Councillor, BC Minister of Municipal Affairs, and established the Liveable Region Strategic Plan (1990)

Bill McCreery, former registered architect AIBC & AAA, helped create North & South False Creek & thousands of units of developer, public & social housing in BC, Alberta & UK, developed several Vancouver residential projects

Sean McEwen, Architect, AIBC, FRAIC. Affordable housing advocate

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