



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION No.: **421-02976**

BY: **Ms. DABRUSIN (TORONTO--DANFORTH)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 28, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE NAVDEEP BAINS**

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Response by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Housing policy**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

Parts 1 to 3

Accessibility and safety is a priority for the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and for Canadians in the development of National Building Codes. The NRC works closely with the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (CCBFC) using an extensive consensus-based process with involvement from all sectors of the construction community and the public on a five-year cycle. This approach strikes a balance between stability, flexibility and economic considerations. The NRC makes this information widely available to the public and industry to improve the chances of Canada-wide adoption and to increase industry uptake.

The CCBFC's consensus-based process leads to a list of proposed technical changes to the Codes which are then submitted for public review. An important feature of the code development and maintenance process is the extent of public involvement.

Code change requests can be submitted to Codes Canada by regulatory officials, design and safety professionals, manufacturers and suppliers, contractors, building managers or owners, consumers, and other public and private sector stakeholders—in fact, by anyone with an interest in the codes.

The CCBFC, an independent committee of volunteers established by the NRC, is responsible for developing and updating the National Model Codes. It oversees the work of 11 committees and several task groups involving as many as 600 members. The **Standing Committee on Use and Egress** is responsible for maintaining and updating the safety of occupants during normal use and emergencies, including accessibility for persons with physical disabilities. Committee members establish the minimum level of performance that each acceptable solutions (code provision) should achieve based on input from the codes stakeholder community. Expertise from the industry, the regulatory community and general interest groups is balanced to ensure that all relevant sectors and geographical areas of the country are represented.

The codes are typically published every five years with the next edition coming out in 2020. In some cases, the codes are amended and/or supplemented to suit regional needs, then published as provincial codes.

The NRC supports the CCBFC by providing administrative and technical services and offering independent research and analysis concerning the development of new requirements or proposed changes to the National Model Codes.

Under the Canadian Constitution, the regulation of building construction is the domain of the provinces and territories, which often delegate this responsibility to the municipalities by act of law.

In recognition of the importance of codes, the 2018 Fall Economic Statement provided \$67.5 million over five years to the NRC, with \$13.5 million ongoing, to make access to the National Building Codes free, and to provide sufficient resources for the federal government to address provincial, territorial, and other stakeholder code development priorities in a more timely way. Building codes are Canadians' assurance that their health, safety and general welfare have been fully considered whenever their homes, places of work and other buildings are built or renovated, including the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. Harmonized and freely available building codes will also ensure that all municipalities can readily access and use the latest codes as they become available.

All proposed changes that are considered by the CCBFC are subjected to a rigorous review process to ensure that any changes benefit Canadians. This process examines both the financial cost and societal benefits any proposed change will have on Canadians as well as if there is a need to regulate and whether they could be enforced.

When necessary, the NRC will partner with other organizations such as the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to ensure the highest level of benefits to Canadians. Furthermore, the CMHC is welcome to submit its candidature to any standing committee as they see fit to discuss concerns for the next code cycle. The CMHC could also voice their concerns at standing committee, task group and CCBFC meetings as well as submit comments during the NRC's annual public reviews of proposed changes. Knowing that each comment must be reviewed and answered by the responsive standing committee.

Accessibility is an important issue and the CCBFC is working towards accessibility being a component of the changes to be reflected in the 2020 and subsequent editions of the National Model Codes.

On behalf of the CCBFC, the NRC publishes the National Building Code (NBC), which includes provisions for Accessibility. The CCBFC is currently examining the accessibility requirements in the NBC. If there are specific changes that you would be interested in having considered by the CCBFC please use the following web address to submit your recommendations: [https://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/solutions/advisory/codes\\_centre/code\\_change\\_request.html](https://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/solutions/advisory/codes_centre/code_change_request.html)

## Part 5

The Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) is a valuable and rich source of information on persons with disabilities, and could provide disaggregated data on a variety of topics relevant to housing accessibility.

Results from the 2017 CSD indicate that 22% of the population or 6.2 million Canadians, aged 15 years and over, have a disability. Flexibility and mobility related disabilities are among the top 3 most common reported types of disabilities.

Nearly half (48%) of Canadians, aged 15 years and over, with a mobility related disability use or require an aid, assistive device or modification in their home. This represents more than 1.7 million Canadians. In 2017, 15% of Canadians, aged 15 years and over, needed an aid, assistive device or modification in their home but reported that they did not have it.