

## **Best opportunity in a decade to make home building part of Ontario's "Culture of Conservation" says Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance (CEEA)**

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Public review of Ontario Building Code (OBC) related to energy efficiency and conservation ends March 27, 2006

(Toronto, March 10, 2006) The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is gathering input on proposed changes to the Ontario Building Code (OBC) until March 27, 2006. Consultation documents are available online at [www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca).

Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance (CEEA) President & CEO Ken Elsey said, "This undertaking is important; the 80,000 new homes to be built in Ontario this year must be heated and cooled for the next 80 years. Increased energy efficiency of each home will have huge cumulative benefits, for both the new home buyer and the province's energy conservation objectives.

"The Provincial government has demonstrated strong support for energy efficiency and conservation. The Minister of Energy, Donna Cansfield, is to be applauded for her work on the Energy Conservation Responsibility Act (ECRA). The progress on the ECRA and appointment of Peter Love, the former Executive Director of CEEA, as Chief Energy Conservation Officer signals the importance of Energy Efficiency to this government. However, the proposed changes to the energy efficiency component of the OBC by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing seem to downplay energy efficiency as a priority of the current government. Much more can be done with the OBC."

The authority for expecting more from the current OBC proposal is taken by MPP Brad Duguid's (Minister Gerretsen's Parliamentary Assistant) statement of last year: "Current provincial codes and standards are outdated and should mandate stricter energy efficiency and conservation."

CEEA supports the intent of innovative ideas such as energy efficiency labeling on homes, green roofs, and provisions made for incorporating alternative heating and cooling technology.

A significant omission in the OBC proposal is the lack of energy efficiency standards for renovations (Part 11). The renovation sector is huge, with over \$10 billion spent annually. The opportunity to retrofit older homes and save energy is too important to miss. This is especially important in older cities and towns with a large stock of older buildings.

"Yes, people have to be able to afford to buy homes, but they also need to be able to afford the energy bills," said Elsey. He noted that, "Reputable builders demonstrate daily that affordable energy efficient homes can be built in any part of the Province, many already far exceed the standards put forward in this package.

"Energy efficiency is not an expense – it is an investment, with big returns. Upgrading energy efficient standards in a new home will likely add \$25 a month to your mortgage payment, a cost of \$300 a year. But at the current energy rates, that will save you over \$700 a year. And with energy cost likely to rise in the future, the benefits to the new home buyer continues to grow."

Elsey stated, "CEEA would like to see a revised OBC that reflects EnerGuide 80 standards. Homes built to this standard consume 25 to 40% less energy than those built to current OBC minimum standards."

Else observed, “Increased awareness of the benefits and a commitment to energy conservation by consumers and politicians allows me to think that when approved by the McGuinty government these new standards should serve as a model for the rest of Canada.”

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