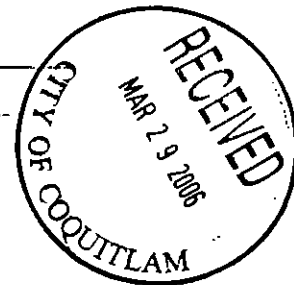




**Canadian  
Association  
of Home &  
Property  
Inspectors (BC)**

- Copies to Mayor & Council
- Tabled Item for Council Meeting
- Correspondence Item for Council Meeting <sup>CoW</sup>
- For Information Only
- For Response Only
- Copies To GM PD



March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Mayor Maxine Wilson and Members of Council  
City of Coquitlam  
3000 Guilford Way  
Coquitlam, BC  
V3B 7N2

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of Council:

Several years ago, on behalf of BC's homebuyers, CAHPI (BC) launched an important consumer protection initiative with the BC government. Our concern then, as now, is this: Anyone can call themselves a house inspector in BC — no training, no qualifications, no accountability.

Buying a house is the biggest investment most people will ever make. If consumers use a home inspector to help them make an informed purchasing decision — or if their lending institution recommends they use one — that inspector must be trained, qualified, and accountable.

So in writing to you today, I want to bring you up to date on recent developments in the effort to protect BC homebuyers. I also want to encourage your renewed efforts to urge the BC government to listen to, and act upon the requests of consumers, communities, municipal councils, chambers of commerce, and the Union of BC Municipalities to introduce standards for the BC house and property inspection industry.

*The call for BC government action is getting louder:*

When we started our campaign to get the BC government to act to establish standards for the BC home and property inspection industry, CAHPI (BC) was a lone voice speaking on behalf of BC consumers. Now, municipalities, chambers of commerce, and the Union of BC Municipalities have spoken on behalf of their communities and have asked the BC government to put these long-overdue standards in place.

CAHPI (BC) has grown, too. With almost 250 Registered Home Inspectors and individuals training to become CAHPI (BC) Registered Home Inspectors in close to 200 BC communities, CAHPI (BC) is the largest home inspection association in BC, verifying the qualifications and knowledge level of home inspectors and registering only those who meet demanding standards.

As well, through our years of work with the Construction Sector Council, the Alliance of Canadian Building Officials' Associations (ACBOA), First Nations, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation we've helped create the National Certification Standard for the home and property industry. These are national standards of competency, certification, and accreditation for private inspectors and municipal building officials now called *the best in the world*.

CAHPI and ACBOA will lead this national certification program, which represents significant national progress on a key consumer protection issue. CAHPI's 1300 members across Canada are proud to be part of an organization that is taking on this national certification responsibility.

Also gratifying is the action by the other smaller house inspection organization in BC, the BC Institute of Property Inspectors and its 50 certified inspectors, and its certifying body of the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of British Columbia in following our lead in calling for BC government action to set standards for the BC house and property inspection industry.

#### *CAHPI (BC) leadership in licensing home inspectors in BC:*

It continues to be difficult to get the BC government to embrace the need for this consumer protection. At first, the BC government said that if consumers were harmed by charlatans posing as house inspectors, they could use the courts. Mr. Campbell's government confused recourse *after* a purchase with protection in *advance* of the largest spending decision of consumers' lives.

In the years since, the government has recognized that its earlier position was wrong, and has written to us on several occasions to say that action may indeed be required.

While this is certainly no indication that the government is going to act on the request of municipalities, chambers, consumers, and the media anytime soon, CAHPI (BC) is preparing for the time when the government of BC finally sees what BC's municipalities and consumers see — that action is required to protect people from phoney and unqualified house inspectors.

To serve the best interests of the general public and the home and property inspection occupation, CAHPI (BC) developed draft legislation for the licensing of home and property inspectors operating in British Columbia. We made this legislation available to delegates at the 2005 UBCM convention, and to the BC Premier and Official Opposition leader. This legislation would ensure that only licensed home and property inspectors could practice in BC.

Now, CAHPI (BC) is going further. We're developing the necessary governance and management framework to be ready for legislation for a self-regulated licensing system for home and property inspectors in British Columbia. Indeed, *if* the BC government acts to protect BC consumers in the manner suggested, CAHPI (BC) would have in place a new governance structure, *including a provincial licensing body*, so that mandatory licensing could occur *as early as January 2007*.

The competence requirements for provincial licensing would be identical to the requirements of the National Certification Program that CAHPI is

overseeing. Provincial licensing for home and property inspectors in BC will be open to all qualified practitioners.

This National Certification Program identifies two stages of certification — ‘Candidate’ and ‘National Certificate Holder’. CAHPI (BC)’s governance plan will give ‘National Certificate Holders’ in BC the power to nominate and elect other ‘National Certificate Holders’ to the board of the provincial licensing body, with the provincial government appointing other board members.

***House inspectors and realtors:***

Last fall, I wrote to Premier Campbell, Opposition leader Carole James, ministers Coleman, Oppal, and Chong, and the BC Homeowner Protection Office as a result of statements by the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC that appeared to advocate a role for realtors in establishing best practices for house inspectors. In the letter, I wrote:

*CAHPI (BC) respects the Real Estate Council and its role in licensing individuals and brokerages engaged in real estate sales, rental and strata property management. But let’s be crystal clear: Realtors’ objective is to sell houses. CAHPI (BC) members’ objective is to provide consumers with the information they need to make an informed choice. The information on a home’s underlying characteristics and condition that a CAHPI (BC) inspector provides to the clients helps them make an informed choice, and yes, sometimes this informed choice frustrates the realtors’ objective to sell the house . . . .*

*Consumers expect their home inspector to be above reproach. In part, this means consumers having complete confidence that their home inspector is in every way independent from realtors — again, because while realtors and home inspectors are both part of the process, our objectives and our responsibilities are very different.*

CAHPI (BC) stands by this important distinction in roles and responsibilities to the consumer. We were disappointed when, earlier this month, the BC Institute for Property Inspectors supported a role for realtors in setting best practices for BC’s house inspectors. While the roles of realtors and home inspectors are very different, the ultimate obligation of each is to the customer. And as customers in a real estate transaction are best served when their realtors and house inspectors perform their roles to the best of their abilities, this means taking every action necessary so that realtors understand why and how inspectors perform their duties.

Accordingly, in the weeks ahead, CAHPI (BC) will request the opportunity to make presentations to BC’s 12 real estate boards on the responsibilities home inspectors have to consumers, and the need for action by the BC government to set standards for the BC home and property inspection industry.

***The BC government ignores municipalities’ demand for consumer protection:***

I said at the outset that we have been working to get the BC government to set standards for the BC home and property inspection industry. It has taken a lot longer than we thought, and in my view, a lot longer than necessary for something so fundamental to the well being of home buyers in our province.

The government has moved a little from its initial position that the courts were the best avenue for consumers, and in no small way, this is due to the efforts in 2005 of BC's municipalities. They stood up for their communities and asked the BC premier to act. They took the issue to last fall's UBCM convention.

But since then, the government has again lapsed into lethargy, leaving BC homebuyers to fend for themselves against con artists masquerading as house inspectors. *So I ask you to act again to focus this government's attention on a consumer protection initiative important to BC communities, large and small.*

I ask you to write to Mr. Campbell:

Tell him that homebuyers in your community deserve this consumer protection.

Tell him that your municipality -- and the dozens of others that wrote to him on this issue last year -- are still waiting for BC government action.

Tell him that CAHPI (BC), the province's largest home inspection association, and one that trains and registers BC home inspectors, is ready to take on the licensing system for home and property inspectors in British Columbia so that homebuyers in BC finally have the protection they need and deserve.

Sincerely,



Bill Sutherland, RHI, Kamloops  
President, CAHPI (BC)

On behalf of:

Vice President:	David Ferrero, RHI, Nanaimo
Treasurer:	Owen Dickie, RHI, Okanagan Valley
Director:	Vince Burnett, RHI, Langley
Director:	Ray Corriveau, RHI, Fort St. John
Director:	Wayne DeJong, RHI, Vancouver
Director:	Chris Stockdale, RHI, Vancouver

For information on the **Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors (BC)** please phone us toll-free at 1-800-610-5665 or visit our web site [www.cahpi.bc.ca](http://www.cahpi.bc.ca). Once there, you'll find important information about our Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and training, plus valuable recommendations on how to select an inspector — all designed to ensure that you get the most out of a home inspection. As well, you'll find a complete list of CAHPI (BC) Members, the men and women from across British Columbia who provide home inspections and who will work to ensure homebuyers have the information they need when making the decision to purchase a home.