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**REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023**

SUBJECT **Zero Carbon Step Code Introduction - Bylaw 4564, “Building Regulation Bylaw No. 5, 2010, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2023”**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The most recent update to the BC Building Code provides an optional power that local authorities can exercise to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings. Staff are recommending an update to the Capital Regional District (CRD) Building Regulation Bylaw to enable emission limits on new building in most areas governed by that Bylaw.

BACKGROUND

BC Building Code Revisions

The BC Building Code (BCBC) revisions which took effect on May 1, 2023, provide an optional power that local authorities can exercise to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings. This provision in the code is known as the Zero Carbon Step Code and consists of four levels of limits leading towards the province’s intention of zero carbon emissions by 2030. A brief description of the levels is as follows.

- a) Level EL-1: Measuring only. No limits.
- b) Level EL-2: Primary heating system to be electrified in most cases.
- c) Level EL-3: Primary heating system and water heating system to be electrified in most cases..
- d) Level EL-4: All building systems including equipment and appliances to be electrified in most cases.

In 2019 the CRD board declared a climate emergency. In 2021 the CRD Board approved an updated Climate Action Strategy, which showed that decarbonizing new buildings was critical to achieving the regions greenhouse gas emission targets. The Zero Carbon Step Code supports the regions goals and moves the housing industry towards electrification of buildings and limits the installation of fossil fuel heating systems. The province has indicated its intention to gradually move to Zero Carbon limits by 2030.

A sampling of builders in the Electoral Areas indicated support for adopting the Zero Carbon Step Code limits, although concerns about limiting the use of propane ranges were raised because of the frequency of BC Hydro grid outages.

Currently the cost and functionality of electric back-up systems are not well understood. As such, staff are recommending enabling Level EL-3 which would in most cases limit the installation of fossil fuel primary space heating systems and water heating systems, while allowing for the installation of propane ranges as well as propane or wood burning secondary or back-up heating systems. Staff are also recommending that areas without hydro power in the electoral areas be exempt from the GHG emissions restrictions.

To allow applicants time to prepare for this bylaw revision it is proposed with an effective date of January 1, 2024.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

- 1) That Bylaw 4564, “Building Regulation Bylaw No. 5, 2010, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2023” be introduced and read a first, second, and third time; and
- 2) That Bylaw No. 4564 be adopted.

Alternative 2

That the Zero Carbon Step Code Introduction - Bylaw 4564, “Building Regulation Bylaw No. 5, 2010, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2023” report be referred back to staff for further information based on direction from the Electoral Areas Committee.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

The Zero Carbon Step Code limits will prevent more fossil fuel appliances from being installed in the region’s Electoral Area.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The Zero Carbon Step code limits support the region achieving the RGS target of a 68% GHG reduction by 2038.

Service Delivery Implications

There are no appreciable impacts to service delivery expected associated with Level EL-3 of the Zero Carbon Step Code.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The Zero Carbon Step Code aligns with Goal 3: Low Carbon and Resilient Buildings of the 2021 CRD Climate Action Strategy.

Financial Implications

The introduction of the Zero Carbon Step Code, Level EL-3, will likely have no or little financial implications on permit applicants and the Building Inspection division.

CONCLUSION

The most recent update to the BC Building Code provides an optional power that local authorities can exercise to limit greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings. Staff are recommending an update to the Capital Regional District (CRD) Building Regulation Bylaw to enable Level EL-3 of the Zero Carbon Step Code for new building in most areas governed by the CRD Building Regulation Bylaw, effective January 1, 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

- 1) That Bylaw 4564, “Building Regulation Bylaw No. 5, 2010, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2023” be introduced and read a first, second, and third time; and
- 2) That Bylaw No. 4564 be adopted.

Submitted by:	Mike Taylor, RBO, Manager and Chief Building Inspector, Building Inspection
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, J.D., General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer
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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Amendment Bylaw No. 4564, “Building Regulation Bylaw No. 5, 2010, Amendment Bylaw No. 6, 2023”

Appendix B: Bylaw No. 3741 (Redlined)