



Safe Temperatures in Rental Housing – September 22, 2025

To:

Honourable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia

Honourable Kelly Greene, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Honourable Brittny Anderson, Minister of State for Local Government & Rural Communities

Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs

Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Health

Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions

We, the undersigned organizations and elected officials, call on the B.C. Government to make protecting tenants from extreme heat a priority.

Dangerous indoor temperatures are an increasingly urgent problem as summer temperatures increase, and extreme heat is one of the top three weather hazards British Columbia is facing. Temperatures will continue to rise, as will healthcare, economic and social costs. The health impacts of extreme heat are often compounded by poor air quality, due to increasingly prevalent wildfire smoke and local air pollutants.

As we saw during B.C.'s 2021 heat dome, the deadliest weather incident in Canadian history, extreme heat can push healthcare systems [to the brink](#). Extreme heat precipitates not only immediate medical emergencies, but heat-related injuries that can persist for years. These dangers fall disproportionately on vulnerable populations, those with the least means to adapt to protect their own health, including older adults, people living alone, pregnant people, young children, people with preexisting medical conditions, and people facing financial barriers. These devastating impacts can be mitigated by ensuring people are able to keep cool in their homes, but currently renters face barriers, restrictions and bans on installing life-saving cooling systems.

We ask the B.C. Government to ensure that tenants have the right to cooling in their homes, and that building owners and stratas cannot unreasonably restrict them from doing so. At the same time, we urge the Province to place greater responsibility on building owners and strata councils to pursue permanent solutions—such as efficiency upgrades and building-wide cooling systems—that can prevent dangerous indoor temperatures and poor air quality. Until such measures are in place, renters must have the clear right and be supported in accessing the means to keep their homes safe and livable, whether through heat pumps, air conditioners, external shading, or other active and passive cooling, ventilation, and air quality measures.

Local governments are leading the way and have repeatedly asked for province-wide action, including through Union of BC Municipalities resolutions.[1]



The City of Port Moody^[2] and City of New Westminster^[3] have established bylaws to prevent unreasonable cooling bans for tenants, but provincial backstops and enforcement supports are needed. BC's Residential Tenancy Act^[4] does not provide sufficient protection to this effect. The burden of proof remains on tenants, most of whom do not have the capacity to engage with the Tenancy Branch, or do not do so for fear of losing their housing.

Since one-fifth of renters live in stratas,^[5] cooling bans should be restricted in this type of housing as well. Similarly, manufactured home park residents, which make up 4% of BC households, face park-wide cooling bans that must be justified or overturned, as detailed in Ecotrust Canada's [latest research](#).

British Columbians' agency to cool their homes to protect their own health should not be unreasonably restricted. Landlords have an obligation to provide safe housing, including adequate home cooling to protect renters' health.

Signed,

Chuck Rumsey, Executive Director, Ecotrust Canada
Patrick Johnstone, Mayor, City of New Westminster
Nadine Nakagawa, Councillor, City of New Westminster
Jessica McIlroy, Councillor, City of North Vancouver
Pete Fry, Councillor, City of Vancouver
Sean Orr, Councillor, City of Vancouver
Lucy Maloney, Councillor, City of Vancouver
Samantha Agtarap, Councillor, City of Port Moody
Amy Lubik, City Councillor, City of Port Moody
Lauren Greenlaw, Councillor, District of Squamish
Isaac Gilbert, Councillor, City of Penticton
Alison Evans, Councillor, City of Pitt Meadows
Dale Bass, Councillor, City of Kamloops
Margaret Pfoh, CEO, Aboriginal Housing Management Association
Monica Bhandari, Chair, BC ACORN
Chris Severson-Baker, Executive Director, Pembina Institute
Yasmin Abraham, President, Kambo Energy Group
Rowan Burdge, Executive Director, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
Dr. Bethany Ricker, Co-Chair, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment - BC
Amanda Burrows, Executive Director, First United
Sunil Singal, Climate Campaigner, Stand.earth
Sherry Yano, Director of Engagement, David Suzuki Foundation
Mohammed Rafi Arefin, Assistant Professor, UBC Centre for Climate Justice



Alexandra Woodsworth, Director of Organizing, Dogwood BC
Glen Hoos, Director of Communications + Sustainability, Down Syndrome Resource Foundation

[1] UBCM resolutions EB19 2023; NR29 2023; NEB5 2024

[2] Port Moody City Council adopted a [rental standards of maintenance bylaw](#) (section 7.2, p. 4) that prohibits unreasonable cooling bans on Jan. 28, 2025.

[3] New Westminster City Council amended their [Business Regulations and Licensing \(Rental Units\) Bylaw](#) (section 34., p. 12) on June 23, 2025 to prevent cooling device prohibitions, including for tenants in stratas. It sets out a process through which building owners may obtain exemptions if they cannot reasonably comply.

[4] See guidance on [Air Conditioning Units](#) and [Policy Guideline 8. Unconscionable, Unlawful, and Material Terms](#) (pp. 2-3).

[5] The 2021 census found 21% of tenant households were in condominiums in BC.