



Ontario Association of Architects

Thursday, October 24, 2019

Mayor Jeff Lehman and Barrie City Council
1st Floor, Barrie City Hall
70 Collier Street
Barrie, Ontario L4M 1G8

Re: Climate Emergency Declaration

Dear Mayor Lehman, Barrie Councillors and City Staff,

I would like to congratulate the City of Barrie for its courage and leadership in considering a Declaration of a Climate Emergency at its council meeting on Monday, October 28. The Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) wholeheartedly supports this initiative, which sends a clear message to the public that Barrie is invested in their future.

The self-regulating body for the architecture profession in the province, the OAA is dedicated to serving the public interest by increasing the knowledge, skills and proficiency of its members. We have been leading through education, providing the tools to our membership for the development of solutions to the climate crisis. Our membership is prepared to help the City of Barrie respond to what we agree is a Climate Emergency.

The OAA has been leading by example, renovating its headquarters in Toronto to meet the 2030 Challenge more than a decade ahead of schedule. The building reduced its energy use by 70 per cent when it reopened earlier this year; when all systems are fully operational, it will meet the 2030 target by having a net zero carbon footprint. A key message from this project is that buildings evolve, and that they can be *renewed* rather than replaced. This approach values the substantial embodied carbon and energy of existing materials and reduces the burden on the environment in terms of emissions, extraction, shipping and landfill.

The OAA has long been committed to working with government and other stakeholders, and it is for that reason that I write to you today. The declaration of a Climate Emergency in municipalities across Canada—and in Barrie in particular—is an essential first step in taking action toward measures to both mitigate and adapt to the worst effects of the breakdown of the climate system.

The architecture, engineering and construction sectors represent as much as 40% of the share of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada. For decades, our members have been at the frontlines of emissions reductions through more efficient building design. In the residential sector alone, a performance improvement of 35% has been achieved from 1990 to 2015, largely due to changes in the building codes and technology improvements.

This is a good start, but we can do much better than that.

A consistent message about the need for balancing our path toward an ever-improving relationship with the natural environment on which we wholly depend, together with fiscal responsibility, must be a core part of our legacy for future generations. Declaring a Climate Emergency corresponds in many ways to goals already pledged by municipal governments. It can help:

- Reduce energy costs for families and businesses;
- Grow the economy by promoting valuable advanced technologies and businesses in Ontario;
- Enable building owners to make better choices with their construction spending;
- Provide the Municipality with the opportunity to reduce red tape; and
- Reduce carbon emissions without increasing government spending.

The OAA supports changes to policies and regulations that underpin the initiatives outlined above to provide a safe and sustainable built environment. Our membership will also continue to vigorously advocate for design and technological innovation that hold tremendous potential for environmental benefit, economic growth in Ontario, and the well-being of future generations around the world.

As a regulatory body that is frequently in contact with the public and with members who contribute over \$130 billion to Ontario annually in direct and induced economic benefits (14% of Ontario's GDP according to an independent report by Altus Group), the OAA and its members are a key part of the skills and leadership needed to realize this climate action.

If you have any questions about the data cited in this letter, or if you require any more information about the role Ontario architects can play in facing the current climate crisis, please do not hesitate to contact me. The OAA remains a ready and willing resource for you and your council and staff. We both support and encourage your pending Declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Kurtin, Architect
OAA, FRAIC
President

