



January 5, 2026

Select Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Bills
c/o Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
Room 224, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Email: PMBCommittee@leg.bc.ca

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Re: Concerns Regarding Bill M216 – Professional Reliance Act

On behalf of local government elected officials, I am writing to express serious concerns regarding Private Member's Bill M216, the proposed *Professional Reliance Act*. While we support efforts to streamline development approvals and increase housing supply, the Bill raises significant governance, public safety, liability, and operational concerns for local governments.

Under the existing framework of the *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act*, local governments may require professional certifications and, where appropriate, peer review to support development approvals. This discretion is essential in areas subject to flooding, steep slopes, wildfire interface conditions, and other hazards. The current professional reliance model allows local governments to exercise due diligence while balancing efficiency with public safety and environmental protection.

Bill M216 would prohibit local governments from requiring peer review of professional submissions, except with authorization from the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG). This restriction applies broadly to rezonings, OCP amendments, development permits, variances, heritage permits, and building permit-related assessments. The result is a one-size-fits-all approach that removes a critical oversight tool and undermines local government autonomy.

Eliminating independent review increases risks to public safety and the environment. Local government staff routinely identify deficiencies in applications already certified by registered professionals. Without the ability to require peer review, the likelihood of failures increase.

Although the Bill suggests that liability rests with certifying professionals, local governments will continue to face legal exposure, public scrutiny, and emergency response costs when failures occur—particularly where professionals are underinsured or unavailable.



The Bill may also delay, rather than accelerate, development. Disputes would be referred to the OSPG, which is not currently mandated or resourced to adjudicate technical disagreements within development approval timelines.

Finally, Bill M216 was introduced without meaningful consultation with local governments or UBCM and departs from the findings of the 2018 Professional Reliance Review, which recommended strengthening oversight and accountability—not eliminating peer review. Concerns also remain regarding enabling provisions for mandatory processing timelines, which may lead to unsafe or sub-optimal outcomes.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the province to suspend further consideration of Bill M216 and to engage in comprehensive consultation with local governments and relevant stakeholders to develop balanced, evidence-based reforms.

Sincerely,

Owen Torgerson
Mayor
Village of Valemount

Cc: The Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Premier David Eby
Cori Ramsay, President, UBCM
BC Municipalities & Regional Districts