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May 18, 2005

Hon. Joe Fontana, P.C., M.P.
Minister Responsible for CMHC
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

On April 12, 2005 I advised you that internal CMHC documents revealed CMHC was aware in 1981 of a serious wet wall problem causing "structural damage in housing across Canada," in particular in coastal British Columbia and Newfoundland.

You were provided with a copy of these CMHC documents showing the corporation's culpability in the housing disaster that was to develop in British Columbia. You were requested to review these documents and to let me know what actions you would be taking to address the failure of CMHC to effectively warn homeowners and potential homeowners of this looming calamity. I have yet to receive a reply or any indication that you intend to act to address the legitimate concerns of homeowners in British Columbia.

Today I want to bring to your attention an additional CMHC document, a letter from the President of CMHC to the Government of British Columbia. The letter makes it very clear that CMHC understood the problems were closely linked and in fact driven by the federal government's energy conservation measures for building construction.

The letter is dated August 27, 1981. The President of CMHC advised the Government of British Columbia that he had informed the Chairman of the Associate Committee on the National Building Code of the wet wall problem requesting that the Committee take a lead role in developing regulatory standards and technical measures to prevent such problems.

Why then in the years immediately after 1981 was the National Building Code continuously changed to further mandate construction practices which worsened the problems? Why did CMHC fail to effectively to address this disaster in the making?

If the President of CMHC thought it necessary to advise the Government of British Columbia of the problem and direct the Associate Committee on the National Building Code to address the problem, why did CMHC let the matter drop? Why did CMHC not take the decisive measures necessary to ensure that the National Building Code was changed so that it no longer promoted defective construction practices?

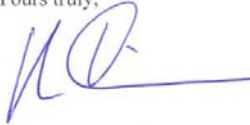
If the President of CMHC thought it necessary to warn the Government of British Columbia in 1981, why did CMHC not warn homeowners who were at that very time buying newly constructed homes destined to suffer serious moisture damage?

If the President of CMHC thought it necessary to warn the Government of British Columbia and the Associate Committee on the National Building Code, why did CMHC not intervene to ensure that home-builders in British Columbia were aware of the problem and directed to make fundamental changes in their construction practices?

The people of British Columbia have suffered for decades as a result of CMHC's failure to properly address deficiencies in building design mandated and driven by CMHC, NRC, and other government departments and agencies and a multitude of government programs. Homeowners deserve answers now.

Homeowners in British Columbia deserve to know what action you will be taking to address the failure of CMHC to warn homeowners and potential homeowners of this disaster.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J.C.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Cummins, M.P.
Delta-Richmond East