

MP claims leaky condo cover-up John Cummins says feds are stonewalling his pursuit of answers

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If Ottawa was complicit in the development of B.C.'s billion-dollar leaky condo disaster, it doesn't plan to release any more potentially damning documents to the public.

That's apparent from the hundreds of pages of censored documents it recently delivered in response to a detailed 20-part question Delta-Richmond East MP John Cummins formally asked the House of Commons last May.

Cummins said the federal government-specifically the federal government's housing and research arms, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the National Research Council-has indicated it isn't able to answer his questions because of ongoing legal action in B.C. courts.

"That the minister of industry, the minister responsible for the NRC, claims that he is unable to answer the questions is outrageous nonsense and is clearly an attempt to stonewall," Cummins said.

The *Richmond Review* has received more than 500 pages of documents, the contents of which are nearly completely blanked out, save for the question Cummins posed, the names of people at the top of e-mails and other correspondence, and the articles published by The Richmond Review and its sister papers earlier this year.

"The government is attempting to hide the failures of CMHC and NRC by claiming the issue is before the courts. The government is misleading the House when it claims that telling the truth about the actions of CMHC in 1981 would undermine their case in court," Cummins said.

Cummins has appealed the decision to the Speaker of the House, claiming that his privilege as an MP has been violated.

"Members of Parliament deserve better. The House deserves the truth. It has been misled," Cummins said. "The government is withholding information necessary to my parliamentary duties."

Earlier this year, *The Richmond Review* published excerpts of several restricted and confidential documents which in great detail show the dawn of a national housing problem stemming from measures to deal with the energy crisis of the 1970s.

In an effort to make homes more energy efficient, the government urged residential construction to include more insulation and other house-sealing efforts to reduce the leakage of heat, and therefore the waste of energy.

But what was apparent by the government's own admission in the early 1980s was a link between these energy-saving efforts and the widespread structural failure of homes on the coastal regions of Canada. There was evidence suggesting that water was becoming trapped inside walls and because of the insulation, the walls could not dry out as they had before the increased insulation was introduced.