

Regional District of Nanaimo Board – Special Meeting Date: November 25, 2025

This document contains closed 'in-camera' meeting decisions that have been released because they are no longer considered sensitive.

L. Grant, General Manager, Development & Emergency Services, Regional District of Nanaimo, re Proposed Bill M216 - Professional Reliance Act

25-IC-218

It was moved and seconded that the Board rise and report on agenda Item 3.1 as follows:

Item 3.1 L. Grant, General Manager, Development & Emergency Services, Regional District of Nanaimo, re Proposed Bill M216 - Professional Reliance Act - That the Board rise and report to the public on the Regional District of Nanaimo Memorandum on Proposed Bill M 216 to communicate the areas of concern as outlined in the staff memo and further that these comments be submitted to the Legislative Assembly of BC Consultation Portal by December 2, 2025 and that the memo be forwarded to the four MLAs who represent the electoral districts within the Regional District of Nanaimo.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Released: January 21, 2026



**CONFIDENTIAL
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Board of Directors

DATE: November 14, 2025

FROM: L. Grant, General Manager of Development & Emergency Services **FILE: N/A**

SUBJECT: Proposed Bill M216 – Professional Reliance Act

BACKGROUND

Bill M216, the *Professional Reliance Act*, was introduced to the BC Legislature on October 21, 2025 by George Anderson, MLA for Nanaimo-Lantzville (Attachment A). The stated purpose of the bill is to streamline development projects and reduce administrative costs in the approval process by local governments. Key provisions include:

- Mandating local governments to accept certified submissions from qualified professionals without independent review, unless incomplete.
- Establishing a new “superintendent” position for dispute resolution.
- Granting the Province authority to set timelines for development application processing.
- Limiting municipal liability in damages claims related to approvals.

Scope: Applies to development project approvals by municipalities, regional districts, and local trust committees, including technical submissions for development permits, building permits, and other land use approvals.

DISCUSSION

The following have been identified by staff as areas of concern with Bill M216:

- No definition of “development project”

The legislation does not provide a clear definition of a development project. Based on background material (Attachment B), it likely applies to land use applications and building permits.

- Designation of a “Local Body” to have act a local government

The province can designate a local body as the local government. This would effectively replace the local government in its role as accepting and reviewing development applications.

- Processing timelines

The proposed legislation can mandate timelines for development approvals. It is unclear how this will be implemented when an application does not meet requirements or requires additional approvals (e.g development variance permit) and/or requires approval from a regional board or city council.

- Submission Acceptance

Often wait times and delays are associated with incomplete applications or information that does not meet local government requirements. The proposed Bill does not address this issue and will likely increase the likelihood of further delays as this may be the only decision point in an application process.

- Peer review and Superintendent Authority

Local government will not be allowed to question or clarify a report from a designated professional or obtain a peer review without the approval of the provincial government. This will result in lengthy delays as experienced with obtaining approvals related to Riparian Area Regulations, Heritage Act, Ministry of Transportation and Transit, etc.

UBCM has also provided commentary on the proposed legislation. This is provided as Attachment C.

Attachments

A: Bill M 216 – 2025 Professional Reliance Act [Bill M 216 – 2025: Professional Reliance Act](#)

B: Briefing Note re: Professional Reliance Act

C: UBCM expresses concern with private members bill [UBCM expresses concern with private members bill | Union of BC Municipalities](#)

Briefing Note re: Professional Reliance Act

Prepared by: MLA George Anderson, Nanaimo - Lantzville

RE: Professional Reliance Act

Purpose: To strengthen local government capacity, accelerate housing approvals, and reduce costs by trusting qualified professionals under existing provincial regulation.

Overview

British Columbia needs to build housing and community infrastructure faster without compromising safety or accountability.

Right now, many local governments are required to re-review the technical work of provincially licensed professionals (engineers, architects, etc.), even though those professionals are already accountable under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA).

This duplication drains staff time, delays housing, and increases costs for families and local taxpayers.

The *Professional Reliance Act* fixes that.

It allows municipalities to **accept certified work from qualified professionals** and move projects forward faster, freeing up staff for community planning and public engagement.

Key Benefits

For young people:

- More homes coming to market sooner, making home ownership and renting more attainable.

For families:

- A better chance to find or own a home in the community they love.

For local governments:

- Less red tape, more capacity, and reduced administrative costs.

For taxpayers:

- Savings on staff duplication and lower development costs over time.

How It Works

- If a professional certified under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) seals their work, local governments can accept it without a second technical peer review.
- The professional remains fully liable and accountable through their regulatory body (Architectural Institute of British Columbia, Engineers and Geoscientist of British Columbia, etc.).
- Municipalities maintain control over zoning, design guidelines, and policy decisions — this reform only streamlines *technical* approvals.
- Disputes between professionals can be referred to the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance (OSPG).

What It's Not

- Not privatization - accountability stays public through OSPG oversight.
- Not deregulation - standards stay the same. The process just becomes faster.
- Not a download to municipalities. Simply a reduction in administrative pressure.

Q&A Sheet – Professional Reliance Act

Q1: Why is this bill needed?

A: Many housing projects are delayed because local governments have to re-review work already completed by licensed professionals.

This duplication adds time, costs, and frustration. The bill modernizes that process so projects move faster and local governments can focus on planning great communities.

Q2: Will this reduce oversight or lower standards?

A: No. Professionals are still regulated, insured, and accountable under the *Professional Governance Act* and the Office of the Superintendent of Professional Governance. Oversight remains public and strong.

Q3: How does this help housing affordability?

A: Every month of delay adds cost. Both for builders and, eventually, for families. By removing redundant steps, we reduce those costs and get homes to market faster.

Q4: Does this take power away from local governments?

A: No. Local councils still decide zoning, design, and land-use policy. The *Act* streamlines technical review so staff can focus on community priorities instead of paperwork.

Q5: How does this help smaller municipalities?

A: Smaller towns often struggle to hire engineers or architects for peer review. This bill saves them those costs and lets them rely on provincially regulated professionals instead.

Q6: Is this a “developer giveaway”?

A: No. Developers still meet all local requirements and hire qualified, accountable professionals. The difference is that cities won’t waste months re-checking certified work.

Q7: What about unionized staff in local governments?

A: This bill doesn’t eliminate positions; it helps municipal staff focus on higher-value work like long-term planning, housing strategy, and public consultation.

Q8: Is this costly to implement?

A: No. It uses existing provincial structures under the *Professional Governance Act* and the OSPG. Local governments may make small bylaw or process adjustments, but the overall effect is cost-saving.

Q9: What’s the broader vision?

A: A faster, more collaborative, and more affordable British Columbia. The act empowers professionals, workers, and governments to work together to build homes and communities that keep hope alive for the next generation.

Q10: What about RidgeView Place in Langford? Couldn’t this potentially lead to more of that?

A: The issues at Ridgeview Place occurred under the existing system and partially informed this bill.

This bill would make it clear that the professionals remain fully liable and accountable through their regulatory body. Further clarifying that local governments will not be liable for the actions of certified professionals.