

**GUIDELINES FOR NEW HOME BUILDER, RENOVATOR AND DEVELOPER MEMBERS  
OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE HOUSING**

Canadian Home Builders' Association

February 2007

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

In February 2006, members of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) approved the CHBA Member Builder's Statement of Business Values and Commitments. The Statement contains five stated values and six commitments<sup>1</sup>. One such commitment titled "Environmental Commitment" includes the following statements:

- "We acknowledge that the development of new communities, and the construction and renovation of homes, has a range of impacts on the environment, both today and in the future. We work with governments and others to develop environmentally responsible housing solutions.
- We are committed to developing communities, and to building and renovating homes, in an environmentally responsible manner through utilizing appropriate technologies, materials, building practices and techniques.
- We pursue continuous improvement and innovation in our processes, practices and products, in order to meet our environmental responsibilities."

The Statement also contains the following commitment: "We have criteria for selecting suppliers of goods and services which reflect our commitment to social, environmental and human rights principles and values."<sup>2</sup>

### **Basis for the Guidelines**

The CHBA has developed a document titled "Canadian Home Builders' Association's Position on the Environment" that further consolidates its position on the environment. The intent of that statement is to provide clarity and guidance to CHBA at all levels and to its members on positions and actions to be considered with respect to environmental issues in housing.

In addition, CHBA has developed this statement that presents guidelines for positions and actions that CHBA's new home builder, renovator and developer members can take in support of the commitment that CHBA members made in February 2006.

The guidelines are based on the following factors:

- Compatibility with members' commitments in the CHBA Member Builder's Statement of Business Values and Commitments.

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<sup>1</sup> The CHBA Member Builder's Statement of Business Values and Commitments outlines values under the following headings: integrity, professionalism, responsibility, community and leadership. It outlines commitments under the following headings: our responsibility to customers, community involvement and investment, environmental commitment, business practices and performance, human resource development and workplace health and safety.

<sup>2</sup> This statement is contained in the section, "Business Practices and Performance" of the CHBA Member Builder's Statement of Business Values and Commitments.

- A belief in the environmental and business benefits of environmentally sensitive housing. The environmental benefits are self-evident. Business benefits include the following:
  - Potential efficiency gains from business practices that reduce energy and resource consumption.
  - Competitive advantage for those businesses that adopt and implement environmentally sensitive business and construction practices. This advantage accrues for several reasons including the following:
    - Increasing consumer expectations for products that are environmentally responsible.
    - Superior corporate reputation.
    - Superior ability to recruit and retain employees because of growing interest by employees in working for employers who care about the environment, which in turn results in greater company productivity.
- An understanding that environmentally responsible housing includes the following attributes:
  - Improved energy efficiency.
  - Improved resource efficiency.
  - Reduced environmental impacts.
  - Healthier indoor environments.
  - Improved economic viability.
  - Improved affordability for consumers.
- The environmental merit of the proposed actions and their practicality for new home builders, renovators and/or developers.

A more comprehensive rationale for the guidelines is contained in the document titled “Canadian Home Builders’ Association’s Position on the Environment”.

## **GUIDELINES FOR NEW HOME BUILDERS, RENOVATORS AND DEVELOPERS**

### **Participate in Environmental Housing Programs**

Member new home builders, renovators and developers are encouraged to participate in environmental housing programs, including the R-2000 Program, EnerGuide for New Houses, and other responsible programs such as Built Green where they are available. Member new home builders are also encouraged to participate in the EnviroHome initiative which supports R-2000.

### **Upgrade the Environmental Performance of Housing**

Whether or not new home builders, renovators and developers participate in one or more environmental housing programs, they are encouraged to upgrade the environmental performance of the housing they produce. This means increasing the energy and resource efficiency, reducing the environmental impact on their housing products, maintaining a healthy indoor environment, and using cost-effective techniques to retain the affordability of these improvements.

Some examples of specific actions that should be considered include:

- Create house designs that minimize construction waste.
- Build well insulated and airtight building envelopes to reduce energy losses, using a variety of proven construction details. This includes proper ventilation.
- Adopt durable construction methods to reduce the need for replacement and consequent construction waste. This includes selecting materials and using construction techniques that are durable, including methods to manage moisture.
- Use of advanced framing techniques to reduce material consumption and also improve the insulation value of walls.
- Use products that include recycled materials to reduce the environmental impact of construction and to reduce the waste stream.
- Purchase third-party certified sustainable materials for construction purposes to reduce environmental impact.
- Use engineered products (e.g., engineered floor joists) to reduce environmental impact and reduce waste.
- Use Energy Star-rated home appliances, heating, cooling and ventilating equipment, lighting fixtures, windows and doors.
- Use solar and geothermal heating, and wind and photovoltaic electricity generating techniques to reduce consumption of fuels that produce greenhouse gases.
- Use automated lighting controls and compact fluorescent lighting to reduce electricity load.
- Use high quality filters or alternative features on the HVAC system to provide clean air and improve the indoor environment.
- Use active heat or energy recovery ventilators to reduce energy losses as a result of ventilation.
- Select materials that have no or low rates of emission of harmful gases.
- Participate in construction waste management programs.
- Provide a facility within the dwelling that encourages occupants to recycle materials; also provide a composter.
- Provide plumbing fixtures that use lesser amounts of water.
- Provide landscaping that requires less water or provide information on this type of landscaping to customers.
- Develop community or project designs that utilize land efficiently, include efficient transportation layouts, sustainable drainage and water conservation systems, and community energy and wastewater systems where this is cost-effective.
- Preserve natural habitats in land development projects.
- Develop brownfield sites where the risks are manageable.

### **Upgrade Proficiency in the Construction of Environmentally Responsible Housing**

- Provide education opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge and ability to construct environmentally responsible housing.

- Work with trade contractors and suppliers on practices that can improve the environmental performance of houses.

### **Upgrade Business Practices to Make Them More Environmentally Responsible**

- Use office facilities that are energy efficient, or develop or modify them to make them more energy efficient.
- Use vehicles that are energy efficient.
- Adopt operating procedures that are energy and resource efficient, e.g., electronic communications between staff that save paper.

### **Communication and Marketing Efforts**

- Promote environmental housing to consumers.
- Communicate the environmental measures and achievements through company marketing efforts.