

Attachment # 3

*Correspondence dated April 8, 2026 from
Dr. Lindsay Bowthorpe, Medical Health Officer*

Sent via email

April 8, 2026

Mayor Johnstone and Council

Corporation of the City of New Westminster
511 Royal Ave
New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9

Re: Adoption of Business Regulations and Licensing (Rental Units) Amendment Bylaw No. 8556, 2026

Dear Mayor Johnstone and Council,

I commend the City of New Westminster for proposing Amendment Bylaw No. 8556, 2026.

This regulation aligns with the BC Coroner's Death Panel Review following the 2021 heat dome, including recommendation three to implement extreme heat prevention and long-term risk mitigation strategies.ⁱ During the heat dome, indoor temperatures in the Fraser Health region reached up to 43°C, contributing to heat-related illness and death in New Westminster and across the province.ⁱⁱ The increasing frequency of extreme heat events in our region to once or twice per decade, underscores the urgent need for preventative action to protect public health.ⁱⁱⁱ

During the 2021 heat dome, individuals with low income had higher odds of heat-related death compared to the general population.^{iv} Low-income individuals often live in rental properties. This Bylaw places the responsibility for demonstrating an inability to provide safe temperatures onto property owners. Requiring a safe temperature in one living space without prescribing the cooling method balances health needs with flexible regulation. By allowing exemptions when a valid need is proven, the Bylaw also signals the City's willingness to collaborate with landlords.

The proposed Bylaw is aligned with the new BC Building Code,^v requiring at least one living space per dwelling to be able to maintain temperatures at or below 26°C. It also parallels rental-related bylaws in other jurisdictions, such as Mississauga, ON,^{vi} and Tempe, AZ.^{vii} Maximum temperatures bylaws also align with requirements for Fraser Health Authority Long-term Care facilities, which must have plans to prevent temperatures exceeding 26°C in living areas.^{viii}

To further protect the health of tenants, I recommend:

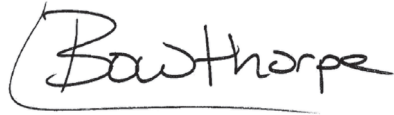
- Removing "between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m." from the definition of Safe Indoor Temperature to ensure tenants always have access to a living space at or below 26°C.
 - Unpublished data from the BC Centre for Disease Control's Sentinel Indoor Temperatures Network, which monitors indoor temperatures in approximately 100

homes across BC, shared by Dr. Sarah Henderson, shows significant variation in when homes experience their hottest conditions.

- Peak temperatures are influenced by factors such as floor level, building orientation, window type, and time of year.^{ix}
- Bylaws in the jurisdictions noted above do not specify times of day for safe indoor temperatures.
- Monitoring indoor temperatures from April 1 to October 31 to assess if adjustments may be required.
 - Climate patterns are shifting, with Special Weather Statements for heat occurring as early as April. Early-season heat can pose greater risks, as people may not be acclimatized.^x

In closing, I wish to recognize the City of New Westminster's continued leadership in advancing actions that support safe and cool temperatures for residents. My team and I are available for further consultation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lindsay Bowthorpe, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC

Medical Health Officer – Medical Director
City of Burnaby and City of New Westminster
Population and Public Health
Fraser Health
Pronouns: She/Her

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- ⁱ BC Coroners Service. *Extreme heat and human mortality: a review of heat-related deaths in British Columbia in summer 2021*. Victoria (BC): Government of British Columbia; 2022 Jun 7 [cited 2026 Apr 8]. Available from: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/death-review-panel/extreme_heat_death_review_panel_report.pdf
- ⁱⁱ Fraser Health Authority. *Impacts of extreme heat events on emergency department visits and deaths in Fraser Health, 2021* (Population and Public Health Report) [internet]. Surrey (BC); Fraser Health Authority; 2022 [cited 2026 April 7]. Available from: https://www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Professionals/MHO-updates/2022_03_23_FHA_HeatDomeReport.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ BC Centre for Disease Control. *Provincial Heat Alerting Response System*. Vancouver (BC): BC Centre for Disease Control; 2024 [cited 2026 Apr 8]. Available from: <https://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Health-Environment/Provincial-Heat-Alerting-Response-System.pdf>
- ^{iv} McLean KE, Lee MJ, Coker ES, Henderson SB. *A population-based case-control analysis of risk factors associated with mortality during the 2021 western North American heat dome: focus on chronic conditions and social vulnerability*. Environmental Research: Health. 2024 Sep 1;2(3):035010. Available from: <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/2752-5309/ad5eac/pdf>
- ^v British Columbia. Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. *British Columbia Building Code 2024* (revision 2). Victoria (BC): Government of British Columbia; 2024 [cited 2026 Apr 8]. Available from: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/construction-industry/building-codes-and-standards/revisions-and-mo/bcbc_2024_web_version_revision2.pdf
- ^{vi} City of Mississauga (2018). *Adequate temperature By-law 0110-2018*. Mississauga (ON): Corporation of the City of Mississauga; 2018. [cited 2026 Mar 26]. Available from: <https://www.mississauga.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Adequate-Temperature-By-law-0110-2018.pdf>
- ^{vii} City of Tempe. *City Code Violations Sec. 21-34: Thermal Environment*. Tempe (AZ): City of Tempe. [cited 2026 Mar 26]. Available from: <https://www.tempe.gov/government/community-development/code-compliance-open-m-i-n-d/landlords-and-renters/violations/owner-tenant-building-requirements/thermal-environment>
- ^{viii} Fraser Health Authority. *Heat Preparedness and Indoor Temperature Standard for Licensed Long-term Care Facilities*. Surrey (BC): Fraser Health Authority; 2022 [cited 2026 Apr 1]. Available from: https://www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Topics/Long-term-care-licensing/Seasonal-readiness/Licensing_standard.pdf?rev=131970ba7f134a8aafd46f817aafd08f
- ^{ix} National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health. *Preventing indoor overheating* [Internet]. Vancouver (BC): National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health; 2023 [cited 2026 Apr 1]. Available from: <https://nceh.ca/resources/subject-guides/preventing-indoor-overheating>
- ^x Government of Canada. *Communicating the Health Risks of Extreme Heat Events* [Internet]. Ottawa (ON); Government of Canada; 2020 [cited 2026 April 7]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/reports-publications/climate-change-health/communicating-health-risks-extreme-heat-events-toolkit-public-health-emergency-management-officials-health-canada-2011.html>