



April 3, 2020

Mr. Michael Mallery, Chief Fire Prevention Officer
Office of the Fire Marshal
Department of Public Safety
P.O. Box 5001
Saint John, NB
E2L 4Y9
Via Email: michael.mallery@gnb.ca

Dear Mr. Mallery:

Re: Plans Review

The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of New Brunswick (ACEC-NB) would like to express our concerns regarding a situation that has come to our attention on behalf of some of our member firms. We have been told that the Office of the Fire Marshal is not available to provide plan review at this time as it is not considered critical or essential. While we certainly appreciate the severity of the Covid-19 situation for our province and their employees we believe it is important that your department continue plan review (to the best of your ability) during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It has been suggested that our practitioners proceed to interpret the building code to the best of their ability however we feel this is an unfair ask of our firms as we know individuals interpret the building code differently and we are concerned there may be liability issues should a firm proceed in one direction only to have it overturned by the Fire Marshal's office at a later time.

It is the role of your office to implement and manage fire inspections and plan review systems, to ensure compliance with national building and fire codes and provincial regulations, we ask that you continue to do this.

Our members represent critical and essential expertise that New Brunswick will need as we navigate the current crisis and assist with the recovery. We believe the planning and design of important infrastructure is essential. While New Brunswickers are coping with a variety of restrictions as a result of the health crisis, it is essential that they have access to our professionals to build and maintain essential services like transportation, water/wastewater treatment, power and our civic institutions like hospitals. The consulting engineering and architectural sectors are prepared to continue providing services needed to deliver critical projects in a manner that the health and safety of all involved is appropriately protected but we cannot do that without the help of our government partners.

While we appreciate that the New Brunswick Fire Protection Act doesn't require a plan review to start construction only that plans be submitted, we ask that:



1. Your department continue plan review (to the best of your ability) during the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. If “formal plan review” cannot occur due to administrative staff issues, could you provide some interim level of service to help keep things moving on key project issues.
3. Would your office consider empowering certain firms to provide plan review services in the interim? Third party reviews/certifications are not uncommon in other jurisdictions.

We appreciate your consideration and understanding of the predicaments that many businesses and entire industries now find themselves in and look forward to your continued support. If you would like to discuss any aspects of the above, please don't hesitate to contact us at the coordinates below.

Kind Regards,

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