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# WRLA Advocacy Bulletin 3

Dear WRLA Members

My apologies for this Bulletin being a little delayed, however I wanted to update you on a few things...

- 1) Our Advocacy and Government Relations Action Plan leading up to the federal election;
- 2) The key messages we will be delivering to federal politicians over the coming months;
- 3) Details of my recent trip to Ottawa to meet with like-minded organizations which have many of the same objectives as we have, and to share ideas on plans leading up to the election and explore ways in which we can collaborate with these organizations in order to fully maximize our effectiveness on your behalf.

## **Our Advocacy and Government Relations Action Plan:**

- We will communicate directly with those preparing major party platforms in order to highlight those issues which are most important to our sector and to you our members
- We will facilitate our members communicating directly with major party candidates in their ridings prior to the federal election
- We will encourage some of our members to meet with and present our priorities directly to some of the key candidates in the coming election.
- We will prepare all materials necessary to make these tasks as simple and effective as possible. (e.g. letters, power point presentations, etc.)
- We will produce opinion pieces which can be submitted by our members for insertion in their local daily and weekly newspapers across our regions, again highlighting those issues which are most important to you our members.
- And, we will keep you apprised of our progress by producing monthly Advocacy Bulletins such as this in the lead up the October Federal election.

## **Key messages we will be delivering to Federal politicians:**

- 1) **Eco-housing tax credit:** Few deny that climate change is real and having an increasingly negative impact on our quality of life. The WRLA's view is that to help deal with climate change; to tackle the underground economy head on (and create some additional tax revenue); to provide a much needed boost to the construction sector; and, to assist Canadians in upgrading Canada's existing housing stock, **an Eco-housing tax credit should be implemented** using the EnerGuide Rating System.

- 2) **Modified Stress Test:** The Stress Test needn't be scrapped but updated for non-insured mortgages. The update would apply a higher stress rate to open and short duration mortgages and a lower one for those of longer duration with locked in rates.
  
- 3) **Mortgage Rules:** It's estimated that the June 2012 reduction of maximum amortization for insured mortgages from 30 to 25 years has **annually** eliminated an estimated 20,000 potential first time home buyers from the market. The WRLA's view is that for qualified first-time home buyers, **the Federal Government should re-instate amortization periods of up to 30 years** for insured mortgages.

#### **Ottawa Meetings June 25 and 26:**

During a recent trip to Ottawa at the end of June, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of three national organizations whose members share many of the same challenges and objectives of our WRLA members.

I met with Kevin Lee, CEO of the Canadian Homebuilders' Association; I met with Rodrigue Gilbert, VP of Public Affairs with the Canadian Construction Association; and I met with Linda Kristal, VP Advocacy and Dina McNeil, Director Government Relations, both with the Canadian Real Estate Association. In each of these meetings, it was made very clear that among other issues, they intend to be very active in pushing for changes such as to the stress test, a return to 30 year mortgages, and some type housing tax credit, all intended to stimulate increased activity in the housing market across Canada.

In all meetings, we agreed to continue talking and working closely together with these organizations (and others) in order to enhance our chances of success in convincing Federal politicians of the urgent need to address these important issues, immediately after the next federal election.

I trust you're finding this information useful. Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to pass them along to me at 204.770.2416 or [lkovach@wrla.org](mailto:lkovach@wrla.org).

Liz Kovach  
President WRLA  
Director Prairie Provinces, Building Materials Council of Canada

**PS:** The WRLA is also very mindful of the importance of regional and provincial issues which affect you, our members. We will shortly be assembling a focus group of some of our Manitoba members to identify issues they want us to advocate on in the run up to the Sept 10<sup>th</sup>, Manitoba election. If you would like to participate in this focus group or would like to advise us of issues you think we should be promoting to Manitoba politicians, please don't hesitate to let us know. Thanks again! Liz.

cc: Andrew Reimer, Chair WRLA Government Relations Committee  
Executive Committee: Tom Bell, Board Chair; Mark Westrum Past Chair; Joel Siebert 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Wendell Gillert 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Mark Kuzma Associate Advisor  
WRLA Directors: Rick Kurzac, Randy MacDonald, Sheila Carr, Ed Stol, Don Wygiera, Joel Seibert, Gregg Chester, Scott McKee, Allan Hall