



HOME PERFORMANCE
STAKEHOLDER COUNCIL

Takeaways From The 2020 Contractors Forum

FEBRUARY 25, 2020

ACCELERATING RETROFITS

THE BC CONTEXT & 2020 CONTRACTOR FORUM TAKEAWAYS

The 2020 HPSC Contractors Forum convened at the Anvil Centre in New Westminster on February 25, 2020 and included a moderated panel discussion on ***The Industry Needed to Meet the Targets – Getting Ready***, a presentation on ***Getting to (More and Deeper) Retrofits***, and world café style moderated table discussions on ***Getting to Deep Retrofits***.

A Deep Energy Retrofit is the renovation of an existing home that results in an overall improvement in building performance. Exact definitions vary but, for the purpose of this document, a deep energy retrofit is defined as a retrofit that results in a reduction of 50% or more compared to baseline energy consumption.

In British Columbia, the annual rate of total retrofits has been growing, but the rate of retrofits is far below historic peaks in retrofit activities.¹ Few homes participating in rebate programs are undertaking multiple retrofits and very few deep energy retrofits are being completed. Most importantly, retrofits are not currently at the level needed to meet short or long term provincial or federal greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.²

The HPSC understands that advancing deep energy retrofits in BC represents a tremendous opportunity for market growth for the home performance industry and an opportunity for utilities and government to meet their respective energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and goals. The HPSC also recognizes the significant challenges that acceleration of deep energy retrofits presents. The challenges range from, but are not limited to: consumer awareness and demand, contractor capacity to scale up, consumer access to contractors, limited verification of installation quality, limited policy and regulatory supports, and the lack of the foundation of a house-as-a-system (HAAS) approach in most retrofits being completed. The HAAS approach considers the intended and unintended effects that changing one component can have on other components, in terms of energy performance, moisture levels, air quality, occupant comfort, safety, and home durability. With the goals of increasing the number of single upgrade retrofits and of more focus on the need for deeper home energy retrofits, all stakeholders need to be working to ensure that retrofits do not result in unintended negative consequences.

The focus of the 2020 Contractor Forum was to explore the concept of deep energy retrofits and the potential options and opportunities for accelerating deep energy retrofits. Stakeholder discussion and dialogue were framed within five broad retrofit acceleration categories:

- ☑ **HOMEOWNER SUPPORTS AND CONTRACTOR CONNECTIVITY**
- ☑ **ENERGY EVALUATIONS**
- ☑ **FINANCING AND REBATE PROGRAMS**
- ☑ **POLICIES AND REGULATION**
- ☑ **OTHER INNOVATIONS AND IDEAS**

¹ During peak periods of LiveSmartBC, 10,000 homes were retrofitted per year.

Source: www.pembina.org/images/pubs/retrofitbc-infographic-2018-3.png

² Estimated rate of retrofits to meet GHG reduction targets: 30,000 homes per year.

Source: www.pembina.org/images/pubs/retrofitbc-infographic-2018-3.png

THE HPSC 2020 CONTRACTOR FORUM TAKEAWAYS

The HPSC greatly appreciates the time and enthusiasm invested by all of the participants in the discussion topic of the day, “what is needed to accelerate the number and depth of home energy retrofits in BC?” The HPSC Executive has summarized our collective takeaways from the event. These takeaways are drawn directly from forum participant input, and build on learnings from our stakeholder engagement over the last two years. These takeaways also incorporate some of the pending plans being put in place to accelerate retrofits, including the enhancement to tools and processes to connect registered contractors to consumers, potential federal funding for financing and energy evaluations, and government commitments to new policies such as the Alterations to Existing Building Code (Retrofit Code).

There are takeaways for each of the five retrofit acceleration categories. Under each takeaway the HPSC has proposed the stakeholder(s) who could take the lead on advancing progress on the identified retrofit accelerator action. **This should not be taken to mean that these stakeholders have agreed to these, or any, roles.**

The HPSC Executive welcomes your feedback on these key takeaways and encourages all participants to continue to stay engaged with the HPSC, and to work in your respective companies or organizations, to accelerate the rate and depth of home energy retrofits in BC.

1. HOMEOWNER SUPPORTS AND CONTRACTOR CONNECTIVITY

It was widely agreed that the two retrofit acceleration options most likely to deliver short term results are: increasing awareness and demand for deep energy retrofits by educating and building consumer awareness, and improving consumer connectivity to contractors. Utilities, various levels of government, and industry already have a strong track record of marketing retrofits, and there is an existing framework for a program-registered contractor network. These foundations could quickly be built on to spark an acceleration of retrofit activity. The three key takeaways from this retrofit acceleration category include:

TAKEAWAY #1

Advocate for the development of comprehensive, large scale, sustained, and effective homeowner communications campaign that is aligned with contractor capacity development and is designed to drive both significantly more retrofits per year and more deep energy retrofits. Encourage collaboration among stakeholders, including various levels of government, utilities, and industry.

- Who: Home Performance Stakeholder Council, Efficiency Canada, all stakeholders

TAKEAWAY #2

Develop an advanced registered contractor program for all key retrofit industry sectors to enable consumer access to qualified contractors who understand the rebate programs and the house-as-a-system approach.

- Who: Home Performance Stakeholder Council, Province of BC, utilities

TAKEAWAY #3

Explore the options for, cost effectiveness of, and potential impact of a retrofit coordinator model and other homeowner support models that simplify the process and support homeowners to complete more and deeper retrofits. As necessary, pilot the model(s) on a local or regional level.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

2. ENERGY EVALUATIONS

It has been identified that energy evaluations have a potential role to play in accelerating retrofits in the short term as well as forming the foundation for longer term market transformation through home energy rating and labeling. However, opinions vary on the type of energy evaluations needed to deliver cost effective results. There is stakeholder interest in exploring the options for developing new simplified online energy evaluation options that can be delivered at less cost and potentially provide more consumer online functionality. It has also been identified that EnerGuide Rating System energy evaluations, while more expensive, have proven in some instances to deliver deep energy retrofit results, in particularly when integrated into a structured program that includes energy evaluations, appropriate rebate levels, and program design elements designed to support multiple energy retrofits per home. Currently, stakeholders in BC are awaiting information about a potential pending federal government offer of “free energy audits for homeowners and landlords” that was identified in the newly elected Liberal government’s December 2019 mandate letters. The two key takeaways from this retrofit acceleration category include:

☑ TAKEAWAY #1

Explore the options, cost effectiveness, and potential impact of simplified energy evaluations processes or online tools that can be used to identify energy retrofit opportunities in homes.

Research the impact and costs of the processes and tools already being used in other provinces/states and explore new innovative solutions.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

☑ TAKEAWAY #2

Support the province of BC to meet its provincial policy commitment to explore home and building energy ratings and disclosure (at time of sale or lease), with the goal of making energy rating requirements as simple and inexpensive as possible³. Stakeholder engagement should be used to ensure the BC solution can be sustained in the long term, meet the needs of the retrofit industry and consumers, align with national energy rating solutions, and ensure the ‘simple and inexpensive’ criteria does not result in an energy rating system that does not support market transformation and improvements in home energy efficiency.

- Who: Province of BC and other stakeholders

3. FINANCING AND REBATE PROGRAMS

BC has growing participation in the existing CleanBC and Home Renovation Rebate Program, but stakeholders acknowledge that participation levels could be much higher and could be delivering more energy savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions per participating home. There are at least three home renovation financing initiatives in the design phase that may be operation in BC in 2020, providing program participants with access to financial loans designed to facilitate consumer adoption of more frequent and deeper energy retrofit projects. The two key takeaways from this retrofit acceleration category are:

☑ TAKEAWAY #1

Collaborate with stakeholders to explore the variety of financing options to enhance existing retrofit rebate programs to significantly increase program participation and the depth of home energy retrofits in each participating home.

- Who: Province of BC, utilities and other stakeholders

³ [CleanBC our nature. Our power. Our future.](#) Province of BC, page 27

✓ **TAKEAWAY #2**

Track and report on the results of the pending home energy financing offers that will be in market, including the District of Saanich Property Assessed Clean Energy pilot, CleanBC 0% financing offer from the Province, and the Federal financing offer.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

4. POLICIES AND REGULATION

Forum participants acknowledged that the success of long term, market transforming energy retrofit acceleration needs to be rooted in policies and regulation. Currently, both the provincial and federal government have signaled that both home energy labelling and the Alterations to Existing Building Code (Retrofit Code) are policy objectives.

✓ **TAKEAWAY #1**

Actively engage a broad group of stakeholders, with focus on contractors, in consultations leading to the development of the Alterations to Existing Building Code (Retrofit Code).

- Who: Province of BC, utilities, municipalities and other stakeholders

✓ **TAKEAWAY #2**

Advocate for an expedited analysis of the best policies and labelling tools that can be used to advance home energy labelling and accelerate deep home energy retrofits. Energy labelling and disclosure, of some shape or form, were identified as key mechanisms to allow for consumers to appropriately value energy efficiency, to determine the comparative efficiency of different homes.

- Who: Efficiency Canada

✓ **TAKEAWAY #3**

Explore options for introducing policies that identify Energy Efficiency as an Infrastructure Priority. Identify how to define this concept in the BC context.

- Who: Efficiency Canada, Home Performance Stakeholder Council

✓ **TAKEAWAY #4**

Advocate for a review of policies, regulations, and other options to enable energy retrofits of rental and strata housing.

- Who: To be determined

5. OTHER INNOVATIONS AND IDEAS

Given the market opportunity and energy and greenhouse gas reduction potential of home energy accelerating retrofits, there is a need for stakeholders to explore new innovations and ideas to accelerate the market. Discussions on this topic focused on the use of data analysis, big data, market segmentation, and target marketing to accelerate retrofits.

✓ **TAKEAWAY #1**

Explore the options, cost effectiveness, implementation models, and potential impact of approaches designed to scale retrofits in a geographic area or neighbourhood. This could include approaches to target homes by energy consumption, housing archetype, or upgrade potential (attic insulation or heating system) type. This scaling of energy retrofits could be at the smaller scale of 10 to 50 homes or designed for the larger scale of over 1000 or 10,000 homes.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

☑ **TAKEAWAY #2**

Explore the options, cost effectiveness, and potential impact of developing and implementing online consumer decision making tools that homeowners could use to make decisions about the cost of energy retrofits, the potential range of energy savings and GHG reductions, and the other non-energy benefits.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

☑ **TAKEAWAY #3**

Explore the options and opportunities to integrate energy retrofits into other home improvement renovations.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

☑ **TAKEAWAY #4**

Investigate the most effective programs and approaches to support home energy improvements in the over 300,000 Indigenous homes in Canada.

- Who: Program designers and administrators

THE HPSC CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above noted takeaways are a compilation of what the HPSC heard at the 2020 contractor forum and from stakeholder engagement over the past two years.

The HPSC acknowledges that it is easy to create lists of takeaways and suggestions, but very challenging to actually design effective retrofit programs and policies that accelerate retrofit activity, support industry to grow their businesses, and are easy for consumers to understand and access. The HPSC welcomes your feedback and input on this document and looks forward to future collaboration with industry and stakeholders that supports the acceleration of retrofits in the Province of BC.

The HPSC Executive Team

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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

The HPSC would like to thank the funders of our organization and this event:



THE CONTRACTOR FORUM AGENDA, HANDOUTS, AND PARTICIPANT LIST

AGENDA

8:30 – 9:00	General Registration
9:00 – 9:15	HPSC Welcome
9:15 – 11:00	Moderated Panel & Q&A: The Industry Needed to Meet the Targets – Getting Ready.
11:00 – 12:00	Presentation: <i>Getting to Deep Retrofits</i>
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 2:45	Moderated Table Discussions: <i>Getting to Deep Retrofits</i>
2:45 – 3:00	HPSC Thank You

CONTRACTOR FORUM HANDOUTS

Presentation:

[HPSC 2020 Contractor Forum Presentation Package](#)

- Introduction: Welcome, Agenda, and HPSC Background
- Moderated Panel: The Industry Needed to Meet the Targets – Getting Ready
- Presentation: Getting to Deep Retrofits

Resources:

- [Home Energy Retrofits: Why use the House as a System Approach?](#)
- [2015-2050 Timeline: Plans, Goals, & Targets Impacting the BC Home Performance Industry](#)

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