

Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

2901 32nd Avenue
Vernon, BC V1T 2L6
manager@vernonchamber.ca
vernonchamber.ca

Dec 1 2025

The Hon. George Anderson

MLA Nanaimo–Lantzville
Via email: George.Anderson.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Re: Submission Regarding Bill M216 – Request for Delay and Extended Consultation

Dear Mr. Anderson,

The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding **Bill M216 – the Professional Reliance Act**. We recognize the importance of safeguarding British Columbia’s watersheds, drinking water supplies, and municipal decision-making processes. However, we are concerned with the pace at which this bill is advancing and the limited opportunity for consultation with the business community.

At present, many of our members, including professionals, developers, utilities, agricultural operators, and businesses that work directly with municipal permitting processes, have not had the opportunity to fully understand or evaluate the proposed changes. As a result, we are unable to accurately assess the bill’s potential economic, environmental, and operational impacts on our region.

While the Chamber is not taking a position of support or opposition at this time, we respectfully submit that **the current timeline does not allow for meaningful engagement with those who will be directly affected**. The feedback we have received so far indicates a strong desire for clarity, transparency, and a more measured approach.

In alignment with other Okanagan business and local government voices, we are requesting the following:

1. A delay in the legislative process for Bill M216

Slowing the bill’s progression would allow local governments, professionals, and industry stakeholders to assess the implications of proposed changes to the Professional Reliance model.

2. A dedicated consultation period with Chambers of Commerce and affected industry groups

The Greater Vernon Chamber is prepared to undertake targeted outreach to our membership, representing businesses of all sizes and sectors, to gather substantive feedback. However, this requires adequate time.

3. Clarity on key concerns raised by local water governance bodies

Organizations such as the Okanagan Basin Water Board have expressed significant concerns about unintended impacts on watershed security and municipal risk exposure. These concerns require thoughtful examination and dialogue before legislative changes proceed.

4. An opportunity for Chambers to submit informed, evidence-based input

Our membership relies on predictable, safe, and well-regulated community infrastructure. To provide constructive, well-grounded input, our members need sufficient time to understand the bill and its consequences.

The Greater Vernon Chamber supports legislation that strengthens economic stability, public trust, and sound governance. We believe that a more inclusive, transparent review process for Bill M216 will better achieve these goals.

We ask that you and your colleagues consider pausing the legislative timeline to ensure that communities, including ours, can meaningfully participate.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We would welcome further dialogue and stand ready to support a broader, more collaborative consultation process.

Sincerely,



Martin von Holst:

Chair of the Advocacy Committee, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

cc:

Okanagan MLAs

UBCM

Okanagan Basin Water Board

BC Chamber of Commerce

City of Vernon Mayor and Council

Okanagan Business Advisory Council

