

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **62 organizations call for increased investment in sustainability**

**Winnipeg, November 30, 2021:** Ahead of the public release of the City of Winnipeg's 2022 budget, a letter calling for greater investment in sustainability was submitted to City Councillors and Executives, with a diverse group of 62 organizations signing on to the call.

The letter, organized by Sustainable Building Manitoba, asks the City to move its Office of Sustainability out of the Department of Water and Waste and have it report directly to the CAO, to increase the budget of the Office of Sustainability to a level closer to similarly-sized Canadian cities, and to create a Community Advisory Council on Sustainability.

“We've been meeting with city officials for over a year to try and understand why there is such a log jam at city hall when it comes to moving forward on some key sustainability issues”, said Laura Tyler, Executive Director of Sustainable Building Manitoba. “We're proud we were able to get such a broad cross-section of organizations signed on, including organizations from the construction industry, the arts, the financial sector, unions, and large environmental organizations like the IISD.”

Having the Office of Sustainability report to the highest level possible is crucial to making change, explained Curt Hull, Project Manager with Climate Change Connection. “The City of Selkirk has the most progressive climate change adaptation plan in the province, and much of that credit is owed to their CAO Duane Nicol. You need to apply a climate change lens to every aspect of your operations.”

The City of Winnipeg's Office of Sustainability has a staff of three, while Edmonton has a staff of 37. “Winnipeg's Office of Sustainability is doing important work, like their recent launch of the Building Energy Disclosure Project, but they simply don't have the resources to get everything done”, said Tyler. “This budget offers nothing new to address climate change”.

The creation of a Community Advisory Council on Sustainability was one of the recommendations of Winnipeg’s Climate Action Plan, adopted in 2018, but it has not yet been created. “There are a lot of passionate, highly educated professionals who want to help. Creating this advisory council is a very inexpensive way for the City to access these resources”, said Tyler.

Efficiency Canada recently released their 2021 Energy Efficiency Scorecard, which has Manitoba falling from sixth to eighth place. “If we don’t move forward quickly on sustainability issues, we will fall even further behind.”, said Hull.

Sustainable Building Manitoba is continuing to accept new signatories until December 10, when the Executive Policy Committee meets to hear public delegations on the budget. Interested organizations and individuals can sign on to the letter at [sustainablebuildingmanitoba.ca/dearwinnipeg](http://sustainablebuildingmanitoba.ca/dearwinnipeg).

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