

**Comm:** Remarks from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB)

**Re:** Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy consideration of Bill 98, *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026*

**Date:** Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Speaker:** Daniel Steinfeld, TRREB President

**Length:** ~990 words (7 mins)

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Good afternoon, Chair, and members of the Standing Committee.

My name is Daniel Steinfeld, President of the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board, representing nearly 70,000 REALTORS® who live, work and serve the people of the Greater Toronto Area, Simcoe County and beyond.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of Bill 98, the *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026*.

Ontario's housing affordability crisis is no longer emerging. It is established, and it is impacting how people live, work, and plan their futures.

Across our province, too many young people and families have lost confidence they will find a home they can afford in the communities where they grew up.

At the same time, housing starts and the addition of more supply have slowed in recent months, underscoring the need for urgent policy action.

That is why TRREB welcomes Bill 98 as an important next step in Ontario's broader housing supply agenda.

This legislation recognizes a simple but critical truth that if we want more attainable housing, we need to make it easier, faster, and less expensive to build homes.

Notably, Bill 98 contains several concrete measures that will help move the province in that direction.

First, the bill proposes reforms to Ontario's official plan system by creating a simplified and standardized province-wide format for municipal official plans, including consistent land-use designations, maps, and structure.

Second, Bill 98 launches a long-overdue section-by-section review of Ontario's Building Code for the first time in four decades, supported by an expert advisory body. Modernizing the Code while maintaining strong safety standards can lower construction costs and remove delays that slow new housing delivery.

Third, Bill 98 would provide authority for the province to establish minimum lot size standards for urban residential land. This is an important measure because overly restrictive local lot size rules often

prevent more efficient land use and limit opportunities for lower-cost ground-oriented housing.

Finally, Bill 98 supports new models for financing water and wastewater infrastructure so growth-related servicing costs can be spread over time rather than loaded disproportionately onto new homebuyers through development charges. That is an important step toward lowering upfront housing costs.

Together with recent commitments on an improved HST rebate for new homebuyers alongside development charge relief, Bill 98 represents significant steps towards boosting housing supply and affordability.

Importantly, many aspects of Bill 98 align with recommendations in TRREB's recently released policy report, *Removing Roadblocks: Tackling Municipal Barriers to Housing Supply and Affordability in Ontario*.

TRREB's report outlines 42 recommendations to remove municipal barriers that continue to slow housing delivery and increase costs in Ontario.

For example, Bill 98's proposed authority to establish provincial minimum lot size standards directly aligns with TRREB's recommendations to establish provincial limits on setbacks and require municipalities to permit sufficient lot coverage to accommodate housing forms already authorized under provincial legislation.

Together, these reforms are essential to ensuring that provincially permitted housing can actually be built in practice.

Similarly, Bill 98's comprehensive review of the Ontario Building Code aligns with TRREB's recommendations to permit single-stair residential buildings up to six storeys, establish clear safety standards for those buildings including sprinklers and floorplate limits, and ensure building code reform supports broader provincial missing-middle housing objectives.

These types of practical code changes can unlock more mid-rise and family-friendly housing options on urban sites that are currently underused.

At the same time, we believe, and we know that Minister Rob Flack and Premier Doug Ford do as well, that Bill 98 should be viewed as another step forward on improving housing supply and affordability, but not the final step.

Ontario's housing crisis was decades in the making, and it will require sustained action in the months and years ahead to continue to address it.

TRREB encourages the government to continue its work of cutting red tape and advancing further housing supply reforms that build on Bill 98.

As outlined in our recent report, one of the most important next steps is establishing province-wide gentle density standards in urban municipalities that permit four units as-of-right on residential lots.

With over 60 per cent of large municipalities in Ontario not enabling four-units as-of-right, it is clear that provincial leadership is necessary to enable more attainable housing options in existing neighbourhoods, including multiplexes and small-scale infill housing.

Second, the province should continue reducing unnecessary municipal costs that undermine affordability by introducing a provincial cap or standardized framework for development charges, while also pursuing reform of Toronto's Municipal Land Transfer Tax.

When costs are added at the point of construction, they don't disappear. They show up directly in the price people pay or the rent they face.

And, third, Ontario should continue encouraging municipalities to eliminate outdated residential parking minimums, particularly near transit and major corridors, or allow for creative off-site parking solutions in car-dependent areas where access to transit is difficult, as those requirements add unnecessary cost and reduce the number of homes that can be built.

The common thread across all of these recommendations is clear.

To improve affordability, Ontario must continue removing barriers that make housing harder and more expensive to build.

TRREB believes Bill 98 moves the province in the right direction, and we encourage the government to build on this progress with amendments or more legislation or policy action in the coming months.

We commend the province for acting through Bill 98, for the HST rebate measures, and for development charge relief initiatives that will help lower the cost of new homes. These are meaningful actions and the ninth bill since 2019 to reform the system and improve affordability and supply. No single bill can solve the problem on its own.

Let me conclude with this.

Ontario's housing crisis was decades in the making.

Over many years, layers of rules, studies, charges, consultations, and local restrictions were introduced.

Everyone had the right intention but *over time*, we have built a system where it is often easier to delay housing than to deliver it.

Bill 98 begins to shift that balance.

The opportunity now is to keep going, with the same level of focus and urgency, until delivering housing is no longer the harder path.

And we urge all members of this Committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.