Why Net-Zero Matters

The bigger picture behind an energy-efficient home purchase

Energy-efficient construction — like the continuous insulation wall system used in this home — isn't just a builder preference. It reflects a broader shift underway across Canada, driven by rising energy costs and national climate commitments. Here's the context every buyer should understand.

Canada's Climate Commitment

In 2015, Canada joined nearly 200 countries in signing the Paris Agreement, a binding international treaty aimed at limiting global temperature rise. To stay on track with that goal, worldwide emissions need to fall by roughly 45% by 2030, with a broader target of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Several Canadian provinces and cities have set their own net-zero targets, generally aiming for 2050 — including British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador, along with cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton, Guelph, and Halifax. Prince Edward Island has set an earlier goal of 2040.

Why Home Heating Is Part of the Equation

Space heating is the single largest source of emissions from Canada's buildings sector. Furnaces and appliances that burn fuel release carbon dioxide and other pollutants, and heavy reliance on combustible fuel also carries fire and safety risks.

- Natural gas is the primary heating fuel across much of Western Canada and Ontario.
- Quebec relies mainly on electricity for heating.
- Heating oil remains common in Atlantic Canada and parts of Northern Canada.
- Regardless of fuel type, a more efficient building envelope (walls, insulation, windows, and air sealing) reduces the energy needed to heat and cool a home — which is exactly what a continuous exterior insulation wall system is designed to do.

What Actually Makes a Home “Net-Zero”?

According to the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA), a net-zero home — new or renovated — is designed to produce as much clean energy as it consumes over the course of a year, using on-site renewable systems (such as solar) to cover whatever energy it still needs after efficiency measures are in place.

Up to 80%	2050	45%
More energy-efficient than a typical new home, per CHBA's definition of net-zero	Canada's national target year for reaching net-zero emissions economy-wide	Reduction in global emissions needed by 2030 to stay on track with the Paris Agreement

Beyond energy savings, CHBA notes that net-zero construction is designed so every part of the home works together to maintain even temperatures, cut down on drafts, and improve indoor air quality by filtering out dust and allergens — adding up to a more comfortable day-to-day living experience, not just a lower utility bill.

What This Means for a Buyer Like You

- **Protection against rising energy costs.** As hydrocarbon energy prices climb, a highly efficient building envelope insulates your budget as well as your walls.
- **A head start on tightening codes.** Energy step codes and net-zero-ready requirements are becoming more common across Canadian jurisdictions. A home already built to a higher performance standard is less likely to need costly upgrades down the road.
- **Everyday comfort.** Even before solar or other renewable additions are considered, a tighter, better-insulated envelope means fewer drafts, steadier temperatures, and better indoor air quality.
- **Longer-term value.** As net-zero performance becomes a more common expectation in the housing market, homes already built with high-performance envelopes are well positioned to hold their appeal.

The continuous exterior insulation system used in this home's walls is one of the key building-envelope components that supports this kind of high-performance, net-zero-ready construction — the same category of wall assembly referenced in real-world Net-Zero Ready energy models across Canada.

This handout summarizes publicly available information on Canada's net-zero commitments and CHBA's definition of net-zero homes, for general buyer reference. It is not a certification or guarantee that this specific home meets net-zero or net-zero-ready standards — ask your builder or sales representative for the specific energy performance details confirmed for this home.

Source: Chris Chopik, “Net zero, Canada’s commitments and the future of homes and buildings,” Real Estate Magazine (REM), March 25, 2024, realestatemagazine.ca. Background context also drawn from the Canadian Home Builders’ Association (CHBA) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement).