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To: The Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario (ARIDO)

Subject: Proposal to Evolve the Title from Interior Designer to Interior Architect

Dear ARIDO,

I am writing to formally advocate for retitling the profession of Interior Design as Interior Architecture. The current title no longer reflects the technical scope, regulatory responsibility, or professional competencies of our field. Interior designers operate within architectural frameworks and are responsible for occupant health, safety, and legal compliance with the building code, yet public perception remains tied to decorative origins. Updating our title is essential to align identity with responsibility.

The term Interior Design originates from early twentieth-century decoration, focused on aesthetics and furnishings rather than structural or regulatory responsibility. Today's practitioners are educated, licensed, and legally accountable, but the public does not fully recognize these responsibilities. The word design applies to both regulated professionals and unregulated decorators, making it difficult for the public to distinguish between them and weakening credibility. Unlike architecture, which communicates technical and legal authority, interior design does not convey responsibility for occupant health, safety, or code compliance. When the profession is seen as optional decoration rather than essential to interior systems, safety, and structural integrity, its economic value is diminished and practitioners are undercompensated. A title that accurately reflects these responsibilities would strengthen public trust, clarify legal accountability, and reinforce the field's professional and economic worth.

Some may argue that renaming the profession could create regulatory conflict with architects or confusion over protected titles. I acknowledge potential resistance, but interior designers share foundational skills, software proficiency, design processes, and legal responsibilities with architects. Many job postings list nearly identical technical and regulatory requirements, showing substantial overlap. The distinction lies in focus and scale: architects manage building systems and envelopes, while interior designers concentrate on interior spatial planning, human experience, and interior assemblies. Recognizing interior design as a specialized form of architecture shifts collaboration from hierarchical dominance to expertise-based contribution, clarifies professional boundaries, improves interdisciplinary teamwork, and strengthens mutual respect.

Rebranding would require administrative investment from regulatory bodies, including changes to legislation and public education. These short-term costs are outweighed by long-term benefits. Clear titles increase jurisdictional clarity, strengthen authority, reduce public misunderstanding, and enhance economic value.

As a student entering this field and gaining a deeper understanding of interior design's responsibilities and scope, I am eager to know whether any initiatives are underway to evolve the profession and whether this topic is currently being discussed within ARIDO?

Kind Regards,

Jayden Finkbeiner