



Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
Fédération de l'habitation coopérative du Canada

Ontario Region / Région de l'Ontario

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March 12, 2010

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis
MPP Hamilton Mountain
952 Concession Street
Unit 2
Hamilton, ON L8V 1G2

Dear Minister,

Re: A Place for Co-op Housing in Ontario's Affordable Housing Strategy

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ontario Region of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada that represents some 550 housing co-ops across the province and the 125,000 residents who are proud to call co-operative housing their home.

As you are aware, Ontario is in the midst of developing a Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, expected to be released later this spring. The co-operative housing sector welcomes this initiative, as the Strategy represents an historic opportunity to develop a bold vision for affordable housing in our province.

The timing could not be more apt. As the Provincial Auditor reported in December 2009, over 137,000 Ontario households sit on municipal waiting lists across the province, anxiously awaiting a home that they can afford. That number, unfortunately, continues to grow.

Faced with a severe economic downturn, Queen's Park must make hard choices about priorities. Construction of affordable housing has a proven stimulative impact and is essential to economic recovery in Ontario. It creates jobs, it is absolutely pivotal in reducing poverty and, affordable housing provides a valuable public asset for the long term.

CHF Canada's Ontario Region has submitted a detailed brief to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with practical recommendations on how to address Ontario's affordable housing needs and improve current programs. We would be pleased to provide this submission to any interested MPP.

The attached brochure outlines, at a very high level, some of the key directions that we feel Ontario's long-term housing plan should pursue.

These include:

- recognizing affordable housing as a core government program, focused on new, permanently affordable, non-profit, mixed-income housing
- to meet growing demand, developing at least 8,000 new homes each year, ensuring that at least half of these units are affordable to Ontario households of low and modest means
- ensuring that a mix of housing is developed and funding new co-op housing based on the historic level of 20% - 25% of units built
- overhauling the *Social Housing Reform Act* (SHRA) to ensure that community-based housing providers are at the centre, not the margins, of decision-making.

Co-operative housing in Ontario is a well-documented success story. For almost four decades co-ops have provided good-quality, affordable housing owned and controlled by the community members who live there. Based on this proven track record, we encourage MPPs to voice their support for a recognized place for co-operative housing in the Province's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

We are anxious to roll up our sleeves and work with the government and MPPs of all parties to make sure that every Ontarian has a decent place that they are proud to call home.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact our Manager of Government Relations, Harvey Cooper at 416-366-1711 x 237 or hcooper@chfcanada.coop, for more information.

Yours truly,



President
Ontario Council
Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada

Attachment:

- *A Place for Co-op Housing in Ontario's Affordable Housing Strategy* brochure