



AUG 20 2015

Ref: 19335

Michael Crawford, President  
BC Association of Social Workers  
402 - 1755 W Broadway  
Vancouver BC V6J4S5

Dear Mr. Crawford:

Thank you for your March 20, 2015 letter regarding Affordable Housing. I apologize for my delayed response.

In your letter, you mentioned the importance of adequate housing in addressing homelessness. The provincial government is aware that homelessness entails significant social and healthcare costs and is committed to providing stable and affordable housing through the provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC. That is why we have invested over \$2.5 billion since 2006 toward ending and preventing homelessness and we are working to ease affordability through a number of programs, initiatives, and supports.

Supportive housing is an important component of the Province's effort to provide stable and affordable housing for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness. We have partnered with eight communities to create more than 2100 new units of long-term low-barrier supportive housing for homeless or homeless-at-risk individuals who require support services to achieve successful tenancies and need safe, affordable housing.

Rental assistance programs are available for both seniors, and families with children, enhancing housing affordability in the private rental market and keeping social housing units available for those who need them most. We recently introduced the Homeless Prevention Program, providing rent supplements to individuals at vulnerable transition points including youth transitioning out of foster care, women who have experienced violence or are at risk of violence, people leaving the correctional and hospital systems, and individuals of Aboriginal descent.

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Minister of Natural Gas Development  
Minister Responsible for Housing  
and Deputy Premier

Office of the Minister

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As you know, outreach workers are a first point of contact for those living on the streets and act as a gateway to support services, that help the homeless transition to stable housing. The Homeless Outreach Program, has expanded to 60 communities from 16 in 2006. Recognizing that a disproportionate number of homeless people are of aboriginal descent, the Province also introduced the Aboriginal Homeless Outreach Program, providing outreach services for chronically homeless, urban and rural Aboriginals who are living off-reserve.

I appreciate your concerns, and assure you that we are committed to partnering with, non-profit organizations and other community agencies to create stable housing.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rich Coleman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rich Coleman  
Minister and Deputy Premier