



Hon. Jean Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Hon. Rich Coleman  
B.C. Minister Responsible for Housing  
PO Box 9052 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E2

May 16, 2016

Dear Ministers,

As Co-Chairs of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Housing, I am writing with regard to the commitment contained in the Government of Canada's 2016 Budget to consult with key stakeholders on the development of a National Housing Strategy. As the national association representing the interests of the affordable housing sector in Canada, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) welcomed this consultation process, and we are keenly interested in its progress.

We understand that at the F/P/T meeting of Deputy Ministers responsible for Housing held in Victoria on May 3, discussions were held on this consultation, and there was an understanding that a consultation process should be accepted at your F/P/T Ministerial meeting in late June. Furthermore, given that many provinces and territories have or will soon undertake similar exercises, we understand the provinces and territories made a strong case that any national consultation needs to complement existing strategies, and that they need to be actively engaged as full partners in this consultation. CHRA agrees with this approach.

At CHRA's Annual General Meeting held April 14, 2016 in Montreal, CHRA members agreed on a Declaration that identifies key principles to underpin the upcoming consultation. I have enclosed a copy of the final Declaration. CHRA prefers to label this initiative a "National Housing Action Plan", which conveys a stronger message to the public that the ensuing policy framework will be actionable and result in positive change within the housing sector.

As the national association representing affordable housing, CHRA's members include social housing providers, municipalities, urban Aboriginal organizations, provincial and territorial housing departments, private sector representatives, national and provincial housing associations, and supportive individuals. CHRA has the membership, relationships, and experience to conduct national and local level consultative initiatives. I have already indicated to Minister Duclos CHRA's willingness to work with F/P/T governments to provide a Secretariat/logistical role in the implementation of this consultation, particularly with regard to consulting local providers and local stakeholders, including urban Aboriginal

providers. That offer from CHRA remains very much on the table. I would be happy to join your Ministerial meeting in late June to further discuss that potential role.

Housing providers and housing stakeholders are very excited at the heightened priority that all governments have accorded affordable housing. We see the upcoming consultation as a welcome opportunity to shape housing policy for years to come, and we thank the federal government for its leadership in announcing this consultation. CHRA and its members look forward to working with you over the coming year to play a key role in this important initiative.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Morrison". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jeff Morrison  
Executive Director

cc. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Housing  
Mr. Evan Siddall, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation  
Mr. Adam Vaughan, M.P.



**Declaration by the Members of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association**  
**Passed at the CHRA Annual General Meeting**  
**April 2016**

*The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) is the national voice of the affordable housing sector in Canada. Our members represent the breadth of the affordable housing spectrum, including social and supportive housing providers, municipalities, all provincial and territorial housing departments, researchers, the private sector, and supportive individuals.*

Canadians recognize the importance of a safe, affordable place to call home. A secure home provides a stable base from which we can raise a family, find and keep work, invest in additional training, and have enough money left over to put healthy food on the table. However, the private market alone cannot meet the housing needs of all Canadians; a robust social housing sector has provided a viable housing solution for millions of Canadians. Currently, for over 600,000 Canadian households, social housing provides a stable housing solution, and in many cases, it provides the social, cultural, health, and economic supports to allow residents to enjoy more fulsome lives. However, for too long, through years of underinvestment in the public housing system, the needs of the affordable housing sector have not been met.

Over 235,000 Canadians will experience homelessness at some point this year. 1 in 4 Canadian families cannot afford the housing they are in. In the past 25 years, federal investment in affordable housing has decreased by 46%. The existing affordable housing stock is aging, and there has not been the investment necessary for renovation and proper maintenance. More specifically, federal operating agreements are already expiring, and by 2040, the federal investment in social housing is set to reach 0 – putting over 300,000 households at risk of economic eviction.

The federal government has indicated its clear interest in reinvesting in affordable housing in Canada. CHRA welcomes this focus by the federal government on rejuvenating the housing sector. The key question now becomes, what is the appropriate path forward?

**The membership of CHRA is hereby calling on the federal government to lead the development of a long-term National Housing Action Plan. Such an Action Plan must include a policy framework and appropriate level of funding to ensure that all Canadians have access to a safe, affordable place to call home.**

CHRA is recommending that a National Housing Action Plan adopt the following principles:

- An Action Plan policy framework be developed with the input of all key stakeholders, including affordable and supportive housing providers, homelessness representatives, federal, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, the private sector, tenants, Aboriginal housing providers, and others.
- An Action Plan must respect local housing conditions and needs; it must allow the appropriate authorities sufficient latitude to orient decisions and investments according to their priorities.
- An Action Plan should reflect the diversity of the housing spectrum. It should address needs and deficiencies across the housing spectrum.
- An Action Plan should establish timeframes, specific actions, and accountabilities amongst respective parties for its proper implementation.
- An Action Plan should support the goals of adding new capacity, ensuring viability of existing stock, and sector transformation and innovation.
- An Action Plan should include Indigenous housing as a pillar including specific components for urban/rural Aboriginal housing, on reserve First Nations housing, and northern housing.