



NEWS RELEASE

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CHRA Indigenous Caucus Calls on the Federal Government to Introduce a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” Urban and Rural Housing Strategy in Budget 2020

OTTAWA – The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association’s Indigenous Caucus today called on the federal government to develop and fund a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” urban, rural and northern housing strategy in the 2020 federal Budget. The absence of a dedicated housing strategy for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous peoples was a glaring gap in the 2017 National Housing Strategy, especially when considering that 87% of Indigenous households in Canada live in urban, rural and northern settings, and the much greater housing challenges facing this population.

Housing for Indigenous peoples living in urban, rural and northern settings is precarious. According to the 2019 Rental Housing Index, Indigenous led renter households are spending a greater proportion of income on rents, and overcrowding is more prevalent. Municipal Point-in-Time homeless counts consistently report an over representation of Indigenous peoples compared to non-Indigenous. 1 in 15 Indigenous people experience homelessness, compared to 1 in 128 for the non-Indigenous population.

To address these concerns, the CHRA Indigenous Caucus has developed a “For Indigenous, By Indigenous” plan which lays out a vision for an urban, rural and northern Indigenous strategy. This plan contains recommendations for investments in new housing supply, protecting and increasing rental assistance, support for wraparound Indigenous services, and an Indigenous led National Housing Centre. This “FIBI” vision has been endorsed by dozens of organizations. In order to rectify the absence of dedicated support for urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing in the National Housing Strategy, the CHRA Indigenous Caucus is calling on the federal government to allocate significant funding in Budget 2020 to implement this Strategy.

“Indigenous peoples living in urban, rural and northern settings are facing a crisis in accessing safe, culturally appropriate housing,” stated Robert Byers, Chair of the CHRA Indigenous Caucus and CEO of Namerind Housing in Regina, Saskatchewan. “The announcement of a For Indigenous, By Indigenous Housing Strategy in Budget 2020 would be entirely consistent with the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Final report, and the final report on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls, as it would not only create safe, affordable homes for Indigenous peoples in urban, rural and northern settings, but it would place the governance for this program in the hands of Indigenous peoples themselves.”

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