



May 5, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Our organizations represent the national and provincial associations representing the non profit and affordable housing sector in Canada. We are collectively writing you today to express our extreme disappointment that the federal government did not include an urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing strategy in the 2021 federal Budget, and we stand in solidarity with the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association's Indigenous Caucus in stating our position that such a strategy needs to be introduced as soon as possible.

More than 80% of Indigenous peoples are not currently served by the distinctions-based strategies. But again, with this budget, we see absolutely no funding for urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing and service providers. This is a national disgrace; one made more apparent through the pandemic.

Mr. Prime Minister, you have repeatedly said that the most important relationship that Canada has is with the Indigenous peoples. If this relationship is the most important to you and this government, then why, through multiple budgets and fiscal updates, has your government chosen to ignore the very mandate letters that you set for them? In the last two mandate letters, you have given clear direction to multiple ministers that an urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing strategy was a priority for your government. If it was indeed a priority, why has it been overlooked yet again in this most recent budget? One time could be considered a mistake. This time it feels much more deliberate. Your ministers have failed urban Indigenous peoples.

Urban, rural and northern Indigenous housing leaders have worked closely with this government, appearing at committees, participating in roundtables, undertaking surveys, and having MPs from all parties join the CHRA Indigenous Caucus Day to better understand the needs of urban, rural, and northern Indigenous providers. Indigenous housing leaders have done the research and have brought numerous organizations together to see this strategy developed. All that was required was your government's commitment to an Urban, Rural and Northern For Indigenous By Indigenous National Housing strategy, a National Indigenous Housing Centre and funding to get started. Despite your repeated rhetoric, we have not seen proof to substantiate the supposed importance your government places on its relationship with Indigenous peoples. If reconciliation has been the ultimate goal of your government, it has been a failure of the highest order.

We are beyond disappointed, disheartened, saddened, and angered. These words fail to scratch the surface of our discontent. And yet, urban Indigenous housing providers have continued to commit to work in partnership with you and your government to ensure the housing needs of all Indigenous peoples in urban, rural, and northern areas are met.

Mr. Prime Minister, your government needs to join with urban Indigenous housing providers and the CHRA Indigenous Caucus at the table to ensure that all Indigenous peoples have a space to call home. Let's repair this broken relationship and find a way to move forward, together, for the more than 80 per cent of Indigenous peoples who live in urban, rural and northern areas across this country.

We stand with the CHRA Indigenous Caucus in calling for an immediate announcement of an urban, rural and northern Indigenous strategy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Atkey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Jill Atkey, Chief Executive Officer
British Columbia Non Profit Housing Association



Margaret Pfoh
Aboriginal Housing Management Association



Susan McGee, President
Alberta Non Profit Housing Association



Christina Maes Nino, Executive Director
Manitoba Non Profit Housing Association



Jeff Morrison, Executive Director
Canadian Housing and Renewal Association



Marlene Coffey, Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Non Profit Housing Association



Justin Marchand, Executive Director
Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services



Chantal Desfossés, directrice générale
Réseau québécois des OSBL d'habitation



George Cormier, Executive Director
New Brunswick Non Profit Housing Association