

DEC - 5 2017



MAYOR'S OFFICE

DEC 11 2017

VICTORIA, B.C.

Ref: 231065

Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps  
and Members of Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps and Councillors:

Thank you for your letter addressed to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier, requesting amendments to the *Local Government Act* (LGA) and the *Assessment Act* (AA). As Minister responsible for the local government system, I am pleased to respond.

Our government takes the issue of affordable and long term housing very seriously. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is working with partners to understand the implications of Short Term Rentals (STRs) for homeowners and travellers, to better understand the impacts on long term rental housing stock and to ensure STRs operators are contributing fairly to tourism marketing programs and our economy.

I commend the City of Victoria's effort to improve the availability of long term housing and read about the recent amendment to your Zoning Regulation Bylaw with interest. Further to your letter, I understand that you are requesting an amendment to the LGA to ensure that the right to legal non-conforming use is only applied to individual units that were legally operating at the time of a bylaw change. I appreciate the intent of your request and accordingly, have asked staff to consider this amendment in the context of government's work to develop a comprehensive, province-wide housing strategy. Please note one of the considerations government will have to review is any broader impacts this may have on all local governments.

You also requested an amendment to the AA to reclassify residential units used exclusively for short term rental as commercial property so that they are taxed at the commercial rate. Ministry staff are engaged in evaluating assessment-based options that could increase housing availability and affordability, including an analysis of short term rental accommodation assessment and taxation.

Ministry staff will continue to engage with City staff to keep them updated. I appreciate your commitment to improving the long term availability of housing in the City of Victoria and I am pleased to receive your suggestions.

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Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Selina Robinson  
Minister

pc: Honourable John Horgan  
Premier

Honourable Carole James  
Minister of Finance