



To Whom It May Concern,

B.C. has one of the lowest rental vacancy rates in Canada at 1.8%, with Vancouver and Victoria representing the largest metropolitan areas with the lowest vacancy rates. Victoria's vacancy rate sits below 1%. Meanwhile, affordable housing has become increasingly scarce in Victoria, with both rental and sale property prices increasing from the previous two years. Each year in B.C., approximately 1500 animals are surrendered to the BCSPCA due to housing related issues that include lack of affordable pet-friendly housing in the region. Without affordable housing options, pet care-takers are often forced to decide between giving up a loved family member or maintaining inadequate housing.

Current tenancy legislation in B.C. allows landlords to discriminate against pet care-takers by prohibiting the presence of animals in residential complexes at their discretion. This places an undue barrier on renters with pets, as the already minimal affordable housing available in various regions is significantly reduced further by this policy.

Those with physical and psychological disabilities are at a further disadvantage when it comes to securing housing as animal guardians. For many, their animal companions provide meaning and fulfilment, and in many cases help alleviate distressing symptoms of their diagnosis. Being denied permission to take their companion animal with them, amidst efforts to improve their housing, can not only be devastating emotionally, but can be a major barrier to quality of life.

It is essential, that individuals with certified emotional support animals provided under the direction of a physician and care team, be allowed to maintain the integrity of their relationships with their animal companions. Forcing people to decide between supportive and safe housing, or an animal who is comparable to a family member is not only unreasonable, it is unconscionable.

The Animal Protection Party of Canada advocates for the interests of animals and their guardians, and encourages government to take corrective action to oppose housing discrimination based on the occupancy of pets. Ontario has had effective non-discriminatory legislation on this issue for over 20 years and we encourage the province of British Columbia to amend their own laws to reflect this progressive policy.

Sincerely,
Jordan Reichert
West Coast Campaign Officer
Animal Protection Party of Canada

