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Murray Rankin
Member of Parliament / Député
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Victoria (Colombie-Britannique)
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April 29, 2016

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos MP
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi MP
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers Duclos and Sohi,

I have written to you previously about the immediate need for federal housing investments in the Greater Victoria region. I am heartened by the funding in the Federal Budget and the first steps it takes to address Canada's growing housing affordability crisis. I am writing again to urge you to support our region's efforts to develop new housing in short order.

Our community has been pulling together to develop long-term housing solutions to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens but we need the support of federal government in matching the regional and provincial government's capital funding commitment. Just last December, the Capital Regional District in support of a Regional Housing First Strategy, stepped up with an investment of \$30 million in capital funding to develop affordable and supportive housing. The provincial government has since made a commitment to match this investment, but more is needed.

Today I am asking your government to match this commitment and to do so immediately. With a matching investment from the federal government, we can take action now to help our most vulnerable citizens. The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, a local government and stakeholder driven organization, has identified priority projects that can get off the ground immediately and start providing support to those in the greatest need. In addition, the region anticipates releasing a Call for Proposals in



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September, 2016 to identify additional 'shovel ready' projects in support of those facing a range of barriers to housing.

Since writing to you in February, the report of the Point-in-Time Count for the Greater Victoria region has been released. The count and survey, conducted on February 10, 2016, shows that at least 1,387 people were experiencing homelessness, it confirms that the number of people experiencing homelessness in our region continues to increase each year, and also confirms that unaffordable housing is a major factor as to why people are without a safe place to call home.

As you well know, years of federal inaction on this file have brought us to the crisis we are experiencing today. I appreciate that your government did not create this crisis but you now have the opportunity to help solve it.

I would be pleased to arrange a more detailed briefing with leaders in our community should that be helpful.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Rankin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Murray Rankin

Copy:

Victoria Mayor Council

Victoria Beacon Hill MLA Carole James

Victoria Swan Lake MLA Rob Fleming

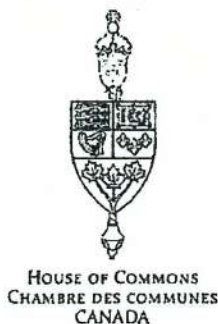
Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness

Victoria Downtown Services Providers

Adam Vaughn, Member of Parliament, Spadina-Fort York

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February 4, 2016

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos MP
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi MP
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers Duclos and Sohi,

I am writing to urge your government to make immediate investments in social housing in the upcoming federal budget. I am heartened by the Prime Minister's direction in your Ministerial Mandate Letters to "create a housing strategy to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing." I would like you to consider the situation in the Greater Victoria region and invite you to visit our city and see firsthand the crisis our local government and social agencies are trying to manage.

The consequences of continued federal inaction on the housing file are evident in the City of Victoria. For years, our region has been grappling with high levels of homelessness and a severe shortage of affordable housing. While media attention is currently focused on people taking shelter on the grounds of our provincial courthouse and in our parks, this is not a recent development: it is an ongoing and pervasive problem. While the City of Victoria continues to develop temporary shelter alternatives a real and lasting solution must include building more social housing.



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Please consider these facts:

- According to a December 2015 report released by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Victoria has the lowest apartment vacancy rate of any major city in Canada at 0.6 per cent.
- According to the recent Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey, Victoria has the second least affordable housing market in Canada, after Vancouver.
- In the Victoria Capital Region, there are 1,239 households on the wait-list for B.C. Housing social housing, about half of them in Victoria proper. About 40 per cent of the people on the wait list are seniors.
- The City's last annual facility count in February 2014 found that in one night 1,167 people were using some form of temporary shelter (i.e. emergency shelter, motel, transitional housing). This group included 70 families with 116 children. Of the 78 individuals turned away from shelter on this one night, there was one youth and 11 children.

It is also increasingly evident that market housing is unaffordable for many and cannot be relied upon to solve the problem of housing affordability. A recent housing-gap analysis, prepared by the Community Social Planning Council for the Capital Regional District, found that new housing supply is focussed on the high-end or luxury market with very little being developed in the rental market that would be affordable at or below the median income rate. A variety of factors have contributed to Victoria and British Columbia having among the highest housing and living costs in Canada that make it extremely challenging for lower income families to access any kind of market housing.

Again, I encourage you to visit Victoria at your earliest opportunity and would be pleased to arrange meetings with local governments and social agencies. Our local and regional governments, along with housing agencies, are actively working on proposals that could get underway in short order with a federal partner prepared to help.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Murray Rankin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Murray Rankin

Copy:

Adam Vaughn, Member of Parliament, Spadina-Fort York

Mayor Lisa Helps and Victoria City Council