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May 14, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Room 281  
Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A1

The Honourable Paul Calandra  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

We are writing you on behalf of municipalities, and the 47 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) to urge you to work collaboratively with us on a “Team Ontario” approach to the National Housing Strategy.

We are in a housing crisis and the need for deeply affordable, community, and supportive housing has never been greater. Thousands of Ontario families rely on housing subsidies funded through the NHS to maintain stable housing. Continued NHS funding is critical so projects can stay on track, providers can continue to operate, and households continue to receive subsidies. The current lack of alignment between the federal and Ontario governments is injecting additional uncertainty into an already challenging landscape.

In a letter to municipal Service Managers and DSSABs, Minister Fraser has requested a meeting with us and committed to flowing NHS funding directly to municipalities and DSSABs rather than through the province.

Municipalities and service managers are committed to doing everything within our power to ensure these critical resources continue to flow for the benefit of Ontario individuals and families who rely on community housing and direct payments. However, we firmly believe that achieving success on this important issue requires all three orders of government to be working in partnership and aligned on a plan. We are very concerned with your recent letter referencing negative service delivery impacts as a result of federal decisions around funding. We request that the province adopt the “Team Ontario” approach underway with the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund to support meaningful provincial-municipal partnership on a sustainable path forward with the federal government on the National Housing Strategy.

Ontario needs a long-term fix for community housing. The downloading of social housing to municipalities in the 1990's without sufficient funding has created many challenges. Long-term impacts of this decision that have not been resolved by successive governments. As you know, this situation is unique to Ontario, the only province where municipalities have this legislated role.

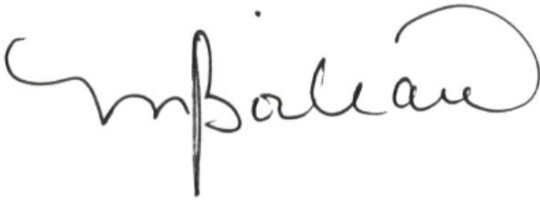
The need for community housing is immense. The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) has estimated that there were almost 215,000 households on waitlists for rent-geared-to-income housing in 2018. The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association recently determined that approximately 140,000 new deeply affordable housing units are needed in Ontario just to approach the OECD average. There is a need for the province and municipalities to sit down together to fundamentally rethink the way that community housing is funded in Ontario to make meaningful progress on the homelessness crisis that is impacting every community province-wide.

The most vulnerable Ontarians are relying on us to work together collaboratively to ensure that those in need of housing have the supports they need. We would welcome the opportunity to meet at your earliest convenience to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Colin Best  
President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
Regional Councillor, Halton Region



Michelle Boileau  
President, Northern Ontario Municipal Services Deliverers Association  
Mayor, City of Timmins



Henry Wall  
President, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association  
CEO Kenora District Social Services Administration Board

cc: Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Brian Rosborough, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
Doug Ball, Executive Director, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association  
Fern Dominelli, Executive Director, Northern Ontario Municipal Services Deliverers Association