



UBCM joins campaign to fix the co-op housing crunch

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(WHISTLER) Municipal governments across B.C. are united in their call to keep some of the province's most vulnerable citizens in their homes.

And in response, the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHF BC) is urging decision-makers in Victoria to listen to the urgent call for action coming from the province's municipalities.

"It means a lot to our members that our campaign has the unanimous support of municipal governments across B.C.," said Thom Armstrong, CHF BC Executive Director.

"We hope the province will listen and take action to find a solution to keep low-income, senior, single-parent and other co-op members from losing their homes."

Delegates at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention in Whistler last week unanimously endorsed the resolution put forward by Metro Vancouver calling on the provincial and federal governments to fund a rent supplement program for low-income co-op members.

The resolution is a response by municipalities to the looming crisis posed by the end of federal agreements with housing co-ops in B.C. and across Canada. As federal agreements expire, so does the financial assistance that makes housing affordable for low-income and other co-op members.

Federal agreements with co-ops have already started to end. By 2017, more than 1,500 co-op households will face a crisis as their homes become unaffordable. By 2020, that number will climb to 3,000 households.

CHF BC and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada's "You hold the key: fix the co-op housing crunch" campaign is aimed at finding a solution to the affordability crunch.

Vancouver Councillor and Metro Vancouver vice-chair Raymond Louie said the resolution sends a powerful signal to government and to housing co-op members alike.

"This is a message to those co-op members who need support from the provincial government to remain in their homes that we are with them," said Louie.

“It’s also a message to the provincial government that it makes no sense to put more than 3,000 households in B.C. at risk of homelessness.”

North Vancouver City Mayor Darrell Mussatto said co-op housing is an important part of the overall solution to the affordable housing crisis.

“Co-op housing relieves some of the pressure of high-cost housing and provides rents geared to income for many families in the City of North Vancouver,” said Mussatto, a Metro Vancouver Director.

“Many co-op households will have to look elsewhere for housing if this problem isn’t resolved. We don’t think they should be forced out of their homes and their communities.”

New Westminster Mayor Wayne Wright said the rent supplement solution proposed by CHF BC is a cost-effective and affordable fix for the co-op housing crunch.

“The solution proposed by CHF BC makes sense,” said Wright, who is also Chair of Metro Vancouver’s Housing Committee. “We hope that the province will give it serious consideration before the affordability crisis gets any worse.”

Armstrong said the You Hold the Key campaign has had tremendous support from the civic level from the start.

“Local governments get it -- they get that you’re not homeless in Canada or B.C. You’re homeless in Vancouver or Surrey or Kelowna,” he said.

“We hope that the province will come to the table with a solution that addresses this problem before it turns into a disaster that affects communities everywhere in BC.”

The UBCM represents every municipality and regional district in B.C. The voice of civic government, it has an excellent track-record of making its policy voice heard at the provincial and federal levels of government.

CHF BC is a co-operative association made up of member housing co-ops and related organizations in B.C. The association represents 243 co-op communities (comprising over 13,000 households) across the province.

For background on the “You hold the key: fix the co-op housing crunch” campaign, please visit the CHF BC website at: www.chf.bc.ca/eoacampaign2014

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Text of the resolution to the UBCM sponsored by Metro Vancouver:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that local governments throughout British Columbia urge the federal and provincial governments to work together to reduce the uncertainty for vulnerable members of housing cooperatives by ensuring that long-term, cost shared rental assistance programs are in place as federal cooperative housing agreements expire.



Co-operative Housing
Federation of Canada