

## RESPONSE TO PETITION

1-17(3)

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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Petition tabled by Mr. Norman Yakeleya on June 13, 2012

Response by the Honourable Robert C. McLeod  
Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation

### Rents Charged to Seniors Living In Public Housing

The NWT Housing Corporation implemented a new public housing rent scale on July 1, 2012. The new rent scale is simpler, more predictable, and fairer. It also addresses concerns raised regarding disincentive to work. It has many benefits for residents of the NWT, though the changes that are being implemented are significant and there will be an adjustment period for all tenants, including seniors.

The NWTHC has been phasing in the new rent scale for seniors who live without other adults in their home. These seniors will not pay rent until September 1, 2012 when they will begin paying 50% of the rent that applies to them under the new rent scale. On July 1, 2013, they will then begin paying the full amount of rent assessed to them. Seniors living with other adults in their homes began paying the full rent on July 1, 2012 along with all other public housing tenants.

Seniors benefit from a \$1000 exemption that is applied to their monthly income when calculating their rent. This gives them an advantage over other households that have the same income. Considering that other households with similar economic circumstances to seniors have been and continue to be required to pay rent, the requirement for seniors to pay rent adds an additional measure of fairness to the Public Housing Program. This degree of fairness was not present under the former rent scale

and has been rectified under the new scale, where all public housing tenants, no matter what demographic they fall under, will pay some form of rent.

Also, the charging of rent to seniors, particularly given the aging NWT population, lends to the sustainability of the Public Housing Program into the future, so that the program remains in place for all residents that need it, including seniors.

For these reasons, the NWT Housing Corporation will not be returning to the policy of not charging rent to seniors.