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Legislative Assembly
Members Offices

October 30, 2014

The Honourable Robert C McLeod
Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corp.
Minister Responsible for Homeless and Youth
Legislative Assembly of the NWT
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Re: Homelessness Resolution

Dear Minister McLeod:

I am writing to you on behalf of our Board of Directors concerning the response that we received to the NWTAC's homelessness resolution.

While we appreciate the commitment in the response to ensure a coordinated response to dealing with this complex and multi-faceted issue, far more needs to be done including a commitment to a "housing first" approach to addressing this issue and ensuring that adequate funding is in place to achieve it.

Successive Territorial Housing Market Needs Surveys report a steady decline in the availability, adequacy and affordability of housing in all NWT communities. The supply of public housing is inadequate to meet demand in all NWT communities. We have this deficit of housing resources confirmed by our municipal elected officials whenever the matter is discussed.

Emergency and transitional housing is unavailable in almost all communities. Those communities that do have facilities in place are able to do so only with support in the form of resources or funds from the community-at-large and/or community and aboriginal governments.

As demonstrated in the recent funding review, communities are not even receiving adequate funding to deliver the services they are mandated and legislated to deliver or to maintain their existing infrastructure. How are they to be expected to deal with homelessness and poverty within that same

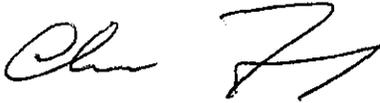
inadequate envelope especially when homelessness and housing clearly falls within the sphere of jurisdiction of the Territorial Government?

In the NWTAC submission to the GNWT Budget Dialogue in 2014, we highlighted that the adoption of the "housing first" strategy provides the basis for improving social well-being, the ability of citizens to seek and hold employment, and the fueling of economic development through infrastructure spending. We have continued to advocate that Territorial revenues should be devoted to the construction of new housing units and to meet the urgent need for capital maintenance on the current deteriorating public housing stock.

The issue of homelessness and public housing have long been on the agenda for the Northern Forum of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and we will be continuing to raise this important issue with our Northern Representatives when we travel to Ottawa next month. They too will need to play a critical role in addressing homelessness in the NWT.

Not nearly enough is being done to fund emergency and transitional housing and to address the ever widening deficit of public housing in NWT communities. We look forward to hearing what the GNWT may be doing to address these concerns including assurances that a "housing first" model is at the core of the strategy.

Best wishes,



Charles Furlong
President
NWT Association of Communities

cc: Members of the Legislative Assembly
NWTAC Board of Directors

2014-02

Homelessness

WHEREAS poverty is not a crime and whereas homelessness is neither a crime nor a lifestyle choice; and

AND WHEREAS homelessness is a violation of human dignity and of human rights; and housing is a basic human need and a precondition for a decent life and social inclusion;

AND WHEREAS homelessness represents the most extreme form of poverty and deprivation, and has increased in recent years in virtually all Member communities;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories is witnessing an unprecedented increase in homelessness;

AND WHEREAS the social and family profiles of people using social housing have changed, and there is increased demand for housing;

AND WHEREAS in some Member Communities there is a shortage of social housing facilities and an increasing need for affordable housing;

AND WHEREAS homelessness is by its very nature a multifaceted problem and requires a multifaceted response that include Health and Social Service agencies as well as Housing agencies;

AND WHEREAS there is increasing evidence that housing-led approaches to homelessness are the most effective;

AND WHEREAS the immediate responsibility for addressing homelessness lies with the Government of The Northwest Territories.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT be it resolved that the GNWT fully fund Homeless Shelters within the boundaries of its communities; and,

AND FURTHER THAT the GNWT direct and fund its departments to end homelessness in the Northwest Territories..

CATEGORY A CONCURRENCE

Return To Top