

Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Metro Chapter

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Submitted to the Hon. Jim Watson,

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Metro Canadian Pensioners Concerned (Metro CPC) is a chapter of the Ontario Division of Canadian Pensioners Concerned, a charitable, non-profit organization which believes that safe, affordable housing is a human right, the lack of which adversely affects both the physical and mental health of all citizens.

Metro CPC strongly urges the Ontario Government to work with other provincial governments to pressure the Federal Government to develop a long-term, comprehensive, inclusive and affordable housing strategy. Toronto is the prime destination for new immigrants and internal migration which places an additional and increasing burden on the current affordable housing stock.

The level of poverty is clearly expressed by the inability of an increasing number of families to pay for both food and shelter. This is confirmed by the reported rise in the use of Toronto food banks. The need for additional affordable and supportive housing in the city is urgent and, in fact, desperate.

Metro CPC strongly urges the Ontario Government to enact legislation that would provide explicit legal authority to enable Toronto and all other municipalities to adopt mandatory, inclusionary policies appropriate to its local needs in order to define the rights, responsibilities and requirements of developers and builders and contribute to the creation of a greater stock of affordable, inclusive housing in Toronto and the rest of Ontario.

Metro CPC strongly encourages the Provincial Government to work with the municipalities, on an urgent basis, to ensure that sufficient and firm long-term funding and staffing policies are developed to fulfill the requirements of an effective, affordable and inclusive provincial housing strategy.

Metro CPC strongly suggests that it is time that the responsibilities, limitations, and authority of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) be reviewed and revised. The OMB has existed under its present name since 1932, however the situation, population and needs of the municipalities have changed beyond recognition since that time. Metro CPC suggests that the OMB, as currently constituted, no longer serves the needs of the municipalities and its citizens.

Metro CPC stresses the importance of transparency in the consultation and formulation process. To this end, Metro CPC strongly recommends that a list of the recommendations arising out of the consultative process be made available on the provincial government's web site no later than March 31st, 2010. As decisions are made as to which recommendations will be implemented and to what degree, this information as well as startup dates should also be posted.

Metro CPC strongly encourages the Provincial Government to ensure semi-annual reporting on progress in meeting targets. Transparency and ease of access to appropriate information is essential for there to be any concrete value in the consultative process and for citizens to believe their opinions matter.

Submitted by:

Jean Gordon, Sylvia Hall and Margaret Watson on behalf of Metro Chapter, Canadian Pensioners Concerned

December 7, 2009