



ALBERTA

SENIORS, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Minister

July 27, 2023

Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Fraser:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. On behalf of Albertans, we would like to draw your attention to an important issue. We are writing to express our deep concerns with the recent funding decisions around federal housing initiatives. Alberta, like all provinces in Canada, is facing a housing crisis and cost of living crisis that has created an urgent demand for supportive and affordable housing. Alberta's provincial and municipal governments share a commitment to working together with all orders of government to find innovative housing solutions and increase the supply of deeply affordable housing.

On July 12, 2023, the Ministry of Alberta Seniors, Community and Social Services was notified by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) as to the status of Alberta's successful applications under the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) phase three funding streams (cities stream and projects stream).

We were deeply disappointed to learn that CMHC only selected six applications out of 39 from Alberta. The funding to these Alberta projects for \$38.3 million is only 2.5 per cent of the \$1.5 billion RHI fund allocated in phase three, and the 200 units funded for Alberta represents only 3.8 per cent of 5,200 units funded through this initiative. Given that Alberta is Canada's fourth largest province representing approximately 12 per cent of Canada's total population, we find these disproportionate results very troubling.

Furthermore, many of the proposed projects that went unfunded were in direct alignment with federal policy objectives, such as proximity to transit infrastructure. While we appreciate the support received during previous allocations of RHI, we are concerned that now Albertans are being left behind.

We are concerned that the federal government does not have a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges Alberta and Alberta's large municipalities face, particularly the significant over-representation of Indigenous people in our homeless population and the need for deep subsidy affordable housing.

.../2

Large municipalities in Alberta are also taking on unprecedented in-migration, which often includes newcomers who are escaping violence in home nations and require access to affordable family units. The lack of equitable regional representation in funding outcomes of federal programs, including RHI, strains relationships at all levels of government, and more importantly, leaves Alberta's most vulnerable community members behind.

On behalf of Albertans, we are requesting two clear actions: 1) reconsider funding allocation to unfunded RHI project stream applications, through RHI or alternative funding sources; 2) take immediate action to develop an equitable funding model in which provinces and territories, and municipalities, are appropriately resourced to deal with the housing challenges in our jurisdictions.

Sincerely,



Jason Nixon
Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services



Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, City of Edmonton



Mayor Jyoti Gondek, City of Calgary