



August 12, 2020

Ref: 255649

His Worship Mayor Rob Vagramov
and Co-signers
City of Port Moody
100 Newport Dr
Port Moody BC V3H 5CE

Dear Mayor Vagramov and Co-signers:

Thank you for your letter addressed to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP, Prime Minister of Canada, and the Honourable John Horgan, Premier, regarding government actions to manage homelessness following the COVID-19 pandemic. As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I am pleased to respond on the Premier's behalf, and I apologize for the delay in responding.

Housing has been a top priority for our government since day one, and after years of neglect by the previous government we have been working to provide the homes people urgently need. As outlined in your letter, the pandemic has compounded the existing housing crisis, especially for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Province of British Columbia responded immediately by extending over 1,500 seasonal shelter spaces and opening over 3,000 Emergency Response Centre spaces with health and social supports, providing people with safe spaces where they can physically distance or self-isolate. This accommodation is assisting a range of people, including those experiencing homelessness, people without safe spaces to self-isolate and women and children leaving violence. The Province also purchased four properties to provide more than 300 new spaces of supportive housing during the pandemic and for the future. To support vulnerable renters and tenants, the Province introduced a new temporary rental supplement program, halted evictions, and froze rent increases until December 2020.

In addition, as part of our \$5 billion COVID-19 response, the Province introduced emergency measures to ensure that British Columbia's most vulnerable, including people on income or disability assistance and low-income seniors, do not encounter additional barriers during the COVID-19 crisis. People currently receiving Income Assistance or Disability Assistance will not see any reductions to their assistance payments because of federal Employment Insurance benefits, including the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), through August. For everyone currently on Income Assistance or Disability Assistance who is not eligible for the emergency federal support programs, the Province is providing an additional \$300 monthly automatic COVID-19 crisis supplement through to the September benefit month. This also applies to recipients of the Seniors Supplement. The Emergency/Disaster Supplement has also been activated to assist people who have extraordinary costs associated with the pandemic and those who may need to self-isolate.

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Our government remains committed to tackling the housing crisis in communities across the province. We have taken significant steps to build affordable housing since forming government in 2017 with more than 2,600 new supportive homes already opened for people experiencing homelessness across B.C. and 1,100 more units underway toward a total of 4,900 supportive homes. These homes are part of our 10-year plan to create 114,000 affordable homes with our partners.

There is still much to do, and we can accomplish even more when we work together. Local governments are crucial partners in the successful development of housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and I invite you to join us in our efforts—our government and BC Housing are ready to partner with you to build the homes people need. You and your councils can also identify and pre-zone land, ensure that approval processes are quick and efficient and work with us to ensure that communities are welcoming of their neighbours.

I look forward to hearing from you about the opportunities that are available in your communities.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Selina Robinson
Minister

pc: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP, Prime Minister of Canada
Honourable John Horgan, Premier
His Worship Mayor Mike Hurley, City of Burnaby
His Worship Mayor George V. Harvie, City of Delta
His Worship Mayor Colin Basran, City of Kelowna
Her Worship Mayor Val van den Broek, City of Langley
His Worship Mayor Jack Froese, Township of Langley
His Worship Mayor Ron McLaughlin, Village of Lions Bay
His Worship Mayor Leonard Krog, City of Nanaimo
His Worship Mayor Jonathan X. Cote, City of New Westminster
Her Worship Mayor Linda Buchanan, City of North Vancouver
His Worship Mayor Brad West, City of Port Coquitlam
Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps, City of Victoria
Her Worship Mayor Mary-Ann Booth, District of West Vancouver
His Worship Mayor Jack Crompton, Resort Municipality of Whistler
His Worship Mayor Darryl A. Walker, City of White Rock
Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A, Metro Vancouver Regional District
Chief Ken Baird, Tsawwassen First Nation