JAN 04 2013

His Worship Bob Bratina
Mayor
The City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West, 2nd Floor
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Bratina, Mr. Jaffray and Mr. Ramirez:

I am writing in response to your addressed to the Right Honourable, Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, regarding affordable housing in the City of Hamilton. As you know, the Prime Minister’s Office forwarded a copy of your correspondence to me for consideration.

Our Government has made significant investments in housing and homelessness and has a multi-pronged approach to facilitate access to housing across the country. We work with Provinces and Territories, Municipalities, national Aboriginal organizations, community groups and other housing stakeholders to improve housing choice and affordability by providing support and assistance across a broad continuum — from shelters for those at greatest risk and transitional and supportive housing to help people live more independently to facilitating access to adequate, affordable housing for low-income households. Taken together, this broad range of housing activities serves to support vulnerable Canadians in housing need.

In July 2011, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for housing announced a new Investment in Affordable Housing 2011–2014 Framework Agreement, with a combined investment of $1.4 billion. Funding for the Framework agreement relates to the final three years of our Government’s commitment in 2008, to a five-year investment of more than $1.9 billion in housing and homelessness to address the needs of low-income Canadians, those at risk of homelessness and the homeless.
Under this new Framework, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario announced on November 8, 2011, a combined investment of $481 million under a new affordable housing agreement that will continue to reduce the number of households in housing need. Under the new agreement, Ontario has responsibility for the design and delivery of affordable housing programs in order to address its own specific housing needs and priorities.

*Canada’s Economic Action Plan* built on the $1.9 billion in housing and homelessness funding by taking action to strengthen Canada’s economy with a two-year investment of more than $2 billion to build new and repair existing social housing.

The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), also currently provides some $1.7 billion annually in support of some 605,000 households living in existing social housing, of which almost 238,000 are in Ontario. Much of this funding is provided under long-term federal/provincial/territorial agreements.

CMHC’s Affordable Housing Centre also provides support for the development of affordable housing by non-profit and private sector proponents with little or no public subsidy, and has facilitated the production of more than 59,000 affordable housing units since its inception in 1991. More information is available on CMHC’s Affordable Housing Centre Web site at [www.cmhc.ca/affordablehousing](http://www.cmhc.ca/affordablehousing), or by calling toll-free at 1-800-668-2642.

In your letter, you also express your concerns with respect to Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding. As you know, the Government of Canada introduced the HPS to provide more effective and sustainable solutions to homelessness. Recognizing that homelessness is a shared responsibility, the HPS works to enhance partnerships with provincial and territorial governments and a wide range of community stakeholders to find longer-term solutions to homelessness, strengthen community capacity and build sustainability.

The HPS is a unique community-based program that provides financial support to 61 designated communities across Canada, such as Hamilton. It also encourages them to work with partners to develop community plans to address the needs of homeless people at the local level. The estimated total allocation from April 2007 to March 31, 2014, for Hamilton is over $31.7 million for 126 projects to help prevent and reduce homelessness.

The HPS was renewed until March 31, 2014, at its current funding level, including funding to the 61 designated communities. These funding allocations were developed with the aim of addressing community needs across the country in an equitable way. The Government of Canada’s investment of more than $1.9 billion in housing and homelessness between April 1, 2009, and March 31, 2014, grants us the flexibility to work with provinces, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations to develop ways to improve effectiveness of federal spending in these areas.
At present, the Government is actively implementing the policy enhancements of the renewed HPS. We will review options and make decisions on the future of federal homelessness investments in due course.

Thank you for taking the time to write. Please accept my regards.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Diane Finley, P.C., M.P.