

Minister
of Human Resources and
Social Development



Ministre
des Ressources humaines et du
Développement social

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J9

Mr. Gordon J. Harding
St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church
100-1022 Nelson Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6E 4S7

OCT 15 2007

Dear Mr. Harding:

I am pleased to respond to your letters of June 28, and July 22, 2007, addressed to the Honourable Chuck Strahl, concerning homelessness in Canada. I also acknowledge receipt of Minister Strahl's August 2, 2007, letter on this issue. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying.

Canada's New Government is working to prevent and reduce homelessness in communities across the country. On April 1, 2007, the new Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) was launched to provide more effective and sustainable solutions to homelessness.

The Strategy fosters partnerships and puts in place structures to help homeless individuals achieve greater self-sufficiency. The federal government recognizes that housing stability is a precondition to positive socio-economic outcomes and full participation in Canadian society. The HPS is therefore focusing on transitional and supportive housing as important measures to help people overcome homelessness.

Under the HPS, funding of \$269.6 million over the next two years will be used to help achieve meaningful and lasting results for homeless persons in Canada, including for Aboriginal people and individuals in major urban centres, rural communities and the North.

The new HPS includes a component that funds work in collaboration with other federal departments to address issues that may increase the risk of homelessness. These include incarceration in correctional institutions, mental health problems, family violence, and immigration. Homelessness is a multifaceted issue that is linked to a variety of other issues, including mental health, and under the HPS, communities identify priority areas in which to invest federal homelessness funding.

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Additional information on the HPS is available on the Homelessness Web site at the following address: www.homelessness.gc.ca. The site will be updated on a regular basis as the Strategy evolves.

I would also like to take the opportunity to share some of the initiatives that Canada's New Government is pursuing to support affordable housing in British Columbia and across Canada, in partnership with provinces, territories, local communities and not-for-profit partners.

The federal government is providing \$1.4 billion towards the creation of more affordable housing through three provincial/territorial housing trusts. Funding for these housing trusts is being allocated over three years. British Columbia's share of this funding is \$156.9 million, and the Province is responsible for allocating these federal funds, which may be used to increase the supply of transitional and supportive housing.

Under the Affordable Housing Initiative, Canada's New Government is in the process of investing \$1 billion, which is expected to create approximately 44,000 affordable housing units. Of the \$1 billion, over \$130 million has been allocated to British Columbia. As of March 31, 2007, a total of 4,456 affordable housing units had been committed or announced in British Columbia, including supportive housing for seniors and persons with disabilities, and housing for persons at risk of homelessness. The Province of British Columbia and others are matching the federal investments. Under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Program Agreement, the Province is responsible for housing program design, allocations and program delivery.

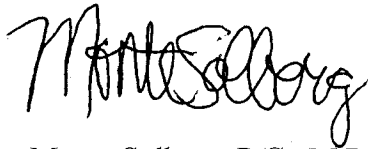
I am pleased to report that the federal government continues to spend approximately \$2 billion annually, primarily in support of some 630,000 lower-income households, 71,100 of which are in British Columbia.

To help maintain the existing affordable housing stock, Canada's New Government announced, in December 2006, a \$256 million, two-year extension of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's housing renovation programs. These programs help improve the quality of affordable housing for low-income people in all regions of Canada. The programs could also be of assistance to those who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. British Columbia's annual share of this funding is \$14.2 million.

I assure you that the federal government is committed to working with all levels of government, local communities, faith-based organizations, and the private, not-for-profit and voluntary sectors to implement short- and long-term solutions to homelessness.

I hope that this is helpful in addressing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monte Solberg". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Monte Solberg, P.C., M.P.

c.c. The Honourable Marjory LeBreton, P.C., M.P.
Leader of the Government in the Senate and
Secretary of State (Seniors)

The Honourable Chuck Strahl, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and
Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians