



February 22, 2022

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Open Letter re: Habitat for Humanity Response to the Report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Clark,

On behalf of Habitat for Humanity's 24 local organizations across Ontario, we are writing to you in response to the Report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force. As we know, the affordable housing crisis has spread to all corners of the province, with housing prices out of reach for most families and individuals in communities both large and small. Bold action is urgently needed.

First, thank you for including two representatives on the Task Force who are from the not-for-profit affordable housing sector, including Ene Underwood, CEO of Habitat for Humanity – GTA. While the Task Force was directed by the provincial government to focus on market housing, their expertise in the affordable housing sector helped shape the recommendations.

Many of the recommendations made by the Task Force also apply to not-for-profit housing providers, including Habitat for Humanity. Our Caucus urges the Government of Ontario to move forward with these recommendations of the report to aid the development of affordable housing, especially for economically vulnerable Ontarians:

- Ending exclusionary zoning to encourage housing density (3).
- Waiving or reducing taxes and fees such as development charges, HST and property taxes, while ensuring municipalities are financially supported (32-34, 36, 39, Appendix B re. property taxes).
- Amending the Planning Act and Perpetuities Act to extend the maximum period for land leases and restrictive covenants on land to 40 or more years (38).
- Providing funding for pilot projects that create innovative pathways to homeownership for Black, Indigenous, and marginalized people and first-generation homeowners (41).
- Improving funding for training in the skilled trades and apprenticeships and incentivize employers to provide more on-the-job training (45, 46).

Regarding the Ontario Housing Delivery Fund, we specifically urge the Government to incorporate incentives for municipalities who are not only enabling the construction of market homes, but also of affordable housing. We also wish to emphasize the importance of the Task Force recommendation that this fund include some level of rebate to municipalities to offset the lost revenues from waiving development charges for affordable housing.



As well, Habitat for Humanity currently has two skills development funding applications before the Government of Ontario to build upon our existing skills training programs in the affordable housing sector. Multi-year, long-term sustainable funding would enable us to reach more students and grow the labour pool for the construction sector.

In addition to these recommendations, **we urge your government to take action immediately to encourage the growth of affordable housing, especially in the not-for-profit and non-market sectors.** To ensure all Ontarians have access to safe, decent and affordable homes, all levels of governments need to support the full continuum of affordable housing, including homeownership and equity-building options.

Habitat for Humanity recommends:

- Revising the province's inclusionary zoning policy to ensure more municipalities are able to use it, especially in smaller communities that are not near a major transit station.
- Eliminating the land transfer tax for not-for-profit affordable housing developers.
- Making publicly-owned land available for affordable housing, while prioritizing access for not-for-profit affordable housing providers in high priority areas.

Our full set of affordable housing recommendations to the Province of Ontario are available in the attached document.

Premier Ford and Minister Clark, we would like to kindly request a meeting to further discuss these recommendations with your office. Please let us know what date and time works best for you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

On behalf of Habitat for Humanity's 24 local organizations in Ontario:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Fryer".

Greg Fryer, Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity Grey Bruce
Chair of the Ontario Caucus GR Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kimberley Woodcock".

Kimberley Woodcock, CEO
Habitat for Humanity Gateway North
Co-Chair, Ontario Caucus

Attachment (1)

cc: Jessica Bell, Ontario NDP Housing Critic

Stephen Blais, Ontario Liberal Party Housing Critic

Mike Schreiner, Green Party of Ontario Leader