



November 9, 2011

Housing Coalition Determined to Increase Affordable Rental Supply

Vancouver – A B.C. coalition of industry, non-profit and government leaders today signed a *Canadian Rental Housing Charter* outlining a nine-point plan to increase the supply of affordable rental housing across the nation. The founding members of the coalition envision a future where there is a sufficient supply of adequate, safe, secure and affordable rental housing for people with a range of incomes.

Coalition Co-Chair and Metro Vancouver Housing Committee Chair Wayne Wright, said, “The Coalition calls on all levels of government, the private sector and the non-profit sector to work collaboratively to address the critical supply shortage of affordable rental housing.”

Increased rental housing supply is essential to the economic and social well-being of cities across Canada. The group’s founding members anticipate the expansion of the Coalition on a national scale to advocate the nine goals outlined in the Charter to meet Canada’s rental housing needs.

Coalition Co-Chair and Urban Development Institute Executive Director Maureen Enser said, “The economic importance of affordable rental housing in this country cannot be overstated. New rental construction creates vital, well paid jobs and sufficient supply is intrinsically linked to business investment and location decisions.”

“Renters are struggling to find good quality rental housing in major cities across Canada. In Vancouver, people are being forced into inadequate housing, often in need of significant repairs, and experiencing frequent moves,” said Charter signatory, Ms Nicky Dunlop, Executive Director of the Tenants Resource and Advisory Centre. “All of this is destabilising for families and individuals.”

The supply of new rental housing is failing to keep up with demand from a growing population. In Metro Vancouver there is an estimated demand of 6,500 new rental units per year, but there are only 600 are purpose-built annually. While the issues may be more extreme in Metro Vancouver, rental vacancy rates across the country remain at historic lows. Mayor Wright added, “The time for combined action is now. The Coalition is resolved to achieving the goals detailed in the Charter.”

Canadian Rental Housing Coalition Founding Members

- Mayor Wayne Wright – Chair, Metro Vancouver Housing Committee
- Maureen Enser – Executive Director, Urban Development Institute
- Marg Gordon – Executive Director, BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association
- Peter Simpson – President and CEO, Greater Vancouver Home Builders’ Association
- Karen Stone – Executive Director, BC Non-Profit Housing Association
- Robert K. Wallace, FCA – CEO, Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver
- Thom Armstrong – Executive Director, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC
- M.J. Whitmarsh – CEO, Canadian Home Builders’ Association of BC
- David Berge – Senior Vice President, Vancity
- Nicky Dunlop – Executive Director, TRAC Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre

The Charter and full list of endorsers is available at RentalCoalition.org

Quotes from Charter Endorsers –

Mr John Winter, President of BC Chamber of Commerce - "Affordable rental housing is critical for small businesses in the region that need to be able to attract and keep workers. Without affordable places to live that are close to jobs and transit, we will have trouble competing for talented workers."

Mr Bruce Pearce, President, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association - "The lack of rental housing is a significant contributor to Canada's affordable housing crisis. The federal government must put in place measures which would grow Canada's rental housing stock, making sure that units are affordable to a range of income levels. The *Charter* details some important options for doing just this."

Berry Vrbanovic, President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) - "FCM supports the Canadian Rental Housing Coalition's call for targeted incentives to stimulate and protect rental housing in Canada."

Right to Housing Coalition of Manitoba - "The Right to Housing Coalition of Manitoba has read and considered the Rental Housing Coalition Charter. We fully endorse the complete Charter as circulated. The charter is clear that creating affordable rental housing to meet the current demand is not only necessary for the households that are suffering from lack of affordable housing, it is also necessary to provide a secure and stable work force to lead us through these tough economic times and capitalize on the current opportunities that exist. By rectifying this component of the housing shortage, governments will be able to focus their attention on the great need for social housing, another area that is sadly lacking."

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CANADIAN RENTAL HOUSING COALITION CHARTER

WE the undersigned envision a future where there is a sufficient supply of adequate, safe, secure and affordable rental housing for people with a range of incomes which is essential to the economic and social well being of cities across Canada. The shortage of affordable rental housing makes it difficult for low and moderate income families, seniors and young people to find appropriate housing that is affordable. We call upon all local, provincial and federal governments, the private sector and the non-profit sector to work collaboratively to restore the cornerstone of a true Canadian value – a safe, secure and affordable home.

Our Mission:

To work collaboratively with all levels of government and the private and non-profit sectors to increase the supply of rental housing in Canada.

Our Principles:

- Adequate, safe, secure and affordable rental housing is necessary to:
 - Attract and retain young people, working families and immigrants, who are essential to a vibrant and sustainable economy
 - Enable people to work, complete or continue their education and participate in their communities
 - Help individuals and families avoid the need for frequent moves; this continuity helps reduce costs to health care and social services
 - Give children a better chance to succeed in life by improving achievement in school, making friends and taking part in sports and other activities.
- Affordable rental housing includes purpose-built market, non-profit and co-op housing.
- Rental building construction has significant, long-term economic benefits for the local, regional, provincial and national economies:
 - New rental buildings are a long-term essential asset for communities
 - New rental construction creates vital, well paid jobs
- A sufficient supply of affordable work-force rental housing is intrinsically linked to business investment and location decisions.

Our Goals:

1. A National Economic Strategy that includes an adequate supply of rental housing as an essential element.
2. Reinstatement of federal tax incentives to stimulate private market rental housing.
3. Increase the viability of non-profit and co-op housing construction through direct capital investment and long-term low cost financing.
4. Increase the supply of federal, provincial and municipal land for affordable rental housing.
5. Modify property assessment practices that over-value rental properties relative to other forms of residential use.
6. Review all provincial taxes, including property transfer tax, to ensure they do not impede delivery of rental housing.
7. Encourage municipalities to adopt policies that support rental housing construction, for example increase density where appropriate, reduce or eliminate charges and fees, reduce regulatory requirements and streamline approvals.
8. Facilitate a long-term commitment from industry to support innovation in the design, financing and construction of affordable market rental housing.
9. Foster a long-term commitment from the non-profit sectors to work with the public and private sector to develop and maintain adequate, safe, secure, and affordable rental housing.

CANADIAN RENTAL HOUSING COALITION CHARTER

Dated this the 9th day of November, 2011.

The founding members of the Canadian Rental Housing Coalition:



Mayor Wayne Wright
Chair, Metro Vancouver Housing Committee

Maureen Enser, Executive Director
Urban Development Institute



Marg Gordon, Executive Director
BC Apartment Owners and Managers
Association

Peter Simpson, President &
Chief Executive Officer
Greater Vancouver
Home Builders' Association



Karen Stone, Executive Director
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