

May 23, 2023

Hon. Kelly Regan, MLA  
Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts  
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Emailed to: [kim.langille@novascotia.ca](mailto:kim.langille@novascotia.ca)

Received LCO  
May 24, 2023

Dear Hon. Kelly Regan,

Re: Standing Committee on Public Accounts

I am pleased to respond to the information requested by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts further to the letter from the Committee dated May 11, 2023.

The information requested is as follows:

- **How many individuals were disqualified from the rent supplement by going from 30 percent to 50 percent?**  
As of January 27, 2023, we changed the way we process applications to ensure those in deepest need receive the help they need. Between that time and May 18, 2023, 464 applications have been approved, and 73 applicants did not meet the new eligibility requirements. This year the rent supplement program will help about 8,000 households in housing need.  
  
The change aligns with the federal-provincial cost-shared agreement under the National Housing Strategy. Existing client were not affected by the processing change.
- **Table the list of those (thousands of affordable housing units) and the plan for those with the Committee.**  
Research demonstrates that increasing housing supply is one of the most effective ways to stabilize rental rates. There are more than 8,000 units currently under construction in Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup>, and we are working diligently with our partners in the non-profit and for-profit housing sectors to further accelerate development across the housing spectrum.  
  
For example, the Executive Panel on housing in HRM has accelerated housing development by designating ten special planning areas that fast-track necessary approvals. This will expedite construction of about 22,000 much-needed units, while ensuring permitting and regulatory requirements are met.  
  
We also recognize the need for a suite of solutions to address the wide range of housing needs, including more dedicated affordable units for those that need them. New affordable units are created and funded through a variety of sources, including federal, provincial, and municipal funding as well as collaboration with partners in the housing development sector. While there is no central mechanism to track all rental rates below average market rent across the province, we know that our investments are making a significant contribution. Some examples of programming delivered through the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing that is contributing to the creation of new affordable housing, include:

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<sup>1</sup> [CMHC Housing Market Information Portal – Nova Scotia – Under Construction – Total – April 2023](#)

- Affordable Housing Development Program – financial incentives to developers in return for offering affordable units over a specified period. Affordability in this program is defined as a minimum of 80% of the Average Market Rent in the location in which the units are built.
- Land for Housing Program - makes government owned land that is suitable for housing available for housing development proposals. To date 25 Property Opportunity Notices have been issued, with 20 proposals received with the potential to create up to 4,000 new units.
- Community Housing Acquisition Program - launched in July 2022, provides fixed, low-interest loans to community organizations to purchase and preserve affordable housing developments. The Department has loaned \$13M to 4 organizations to purchase and preserve 387 affordable units to date.
- Rent Supplement program – provides a monthly benefit to eligible low-income households to help them to afford rent. This year we will invest \$21.6M more in rent supplements, to offer a total of 8,000 supplements to those in the most need.

I sincerely appreciate the Committee's keen interest in this matter and I'm very thankful for your questions. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister  
Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing