



Defend our social housing!

Red Tent Campaign: a Canada-wide coalition for the right to housing

Federal government not renewing funding for social housing

Red Tent Coalition of Canada- concerned about increase in housing crisis

Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal, March 10, 2012 – A coalition of right to housing organizations across Canada concerned over the withdrawal of federal funding for existing social housing have launched a petition drive to put pressure on the Harper government.

Across Canada, hundreds of thousands of co-op, non-profit and public housing units have been receiving subsidies for decades from the federal government. These subsidies, which are connected to their mortgages, allow very low-income families to be housed, but are beginning to run out as the mortgages expire. This phenomenon will accelerate over the next decades. “The number of housing units benefitting from long-term agreements decreased from 630,000 in 2006 to 613,500 in 2010. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) predict this number will go down to 540,800 in 2015. This trend will continue, so that by 2032, the federal government will no longer fund any housing units. All social housing units built before 1994 will be affected”, stated Véronique Laflamme, organizer with the *Popular Front for Urban Restructuring* (FRAPRU), a Québec grouping of housing committees. This represents a loss of \$1.7 billion in funding per year.

“The withdrawal of federal funding will have dramatic consequences”, worries Clark Brownlee, from the Winnipeg Right to Housing Coalition. “Low-income tenants living in co-op and non-profit housing will lose CMHC subsidies that allow them to pay rent geared to their income. These tenants will face steep rent increases, forcing them to leave and be replaced by more affluent tenants”.

“If nothing is done, the housing crisis in Canada will be severely aggravated. Already, there are 982,000 Canadian tenant households facing core housing need. This loss of federal funding comes on top of cuts to federal funding for the creation of new affordable housing, which is at its lowest level in ten years”, announced Doug King, of the Pivot Legal Society, a Vancouver group that initiated the Red Tent Campaign.

The Red Tent Campaign is demanding that the federal government immediately commit to maintaining funding for social housing, after the termination of long-term funding agreements signed when these units were originally built. Since the Conservative government seems indifferent about the issue and refuses to answer to groups’ concerns, the Campaign has launched a petition drive. All those who are either directly affected, such as tenants of co-op, non-profit or public housing, or those concerned about the preservation of our social housing stock are invited to print, sign and circulate the petition.

The petition can be downloaded on the web at: www.defendoursocialhousing.wordpress.com

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