



ALBERTA
SENIORS AND HOUSING

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Beddington*

AR48617

November 28, 2019

Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hussen:

Congratulations on your successful election campaign and your appointment as Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

On election night, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said to Albertans: 'I've heard your frustration and I want to be there to support you.' I look forward to working with you to make that promise a reality. With no Ministers from Alberta in the federal government, I hope you will be especially mindful of the need to take our concerns seriously and work constructively with our government to address them in the best interest of our national economy and national unity.

As Alberta's Minister of Seniors and Housing, I am focused on making housing affordable and accessible for Albertans. Our government is committed to supporting development of more affordable housing through a better return on taxpayer investment. I am exploring innovative solutions, such as the use of mixed-income models and public-private partnerships to maximize our capital investment dollars and create a more sustainable model for the future. Our government is also cutting red tape, eliminating duplication, and working with partners to deliver affordable housing in a way that is efficient and effective.

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Our respective jurisdictions signed a Bilateral Agreement under the *National Housing Strategy* in March 2019. This Agreement included a commitment from both governments to make important investments towards affordable housing in Alberta. Our government has made key, unilateral spending commitments within a sustainable financial framework, but in order to participate fully in the Agreement and contribute to national targets and outcomes identified in the *National Housing Strategy*, all of these unilateral spending commitments must be eligible as provincial cost-match contributions under the Agreement. This is simply a matter of constitutional propriety: the federal government must respect how and when and where provinces choose to spend our money in areas of core provincial jurisdiction. Just because the federal government happens to be the level of government that collects taxes, including taxes covering areas of provincial jurisdiction like local infrastructure, does not confer a right to attach strings and conditions on the transfer back to us of our tax dollars in those areas. I look forward to discussions that move us forward in achieving a strong, sustainable affordable housing system for Alberta that meets Alberta's needs as Alberta determines them.

I am interested learning more about your government's commitment to spend an additional \$15 million annually for building new, purpose-built accessible and affordable housing units, with a full range of health, social, and employment supports for veterans who need extra help in transitioning to civilian life. Our government shares the commitment to ending veteran homelessness, and has a Veterans Service Centre in Edmonton where veterans can find financial, employment, housing and crisis supports.

The Government of Alberta will continue to fight for a Fair Deal for Alberta within Canada, as we have done since the day our government was sworn in, and ensure our legitimate concerns are heard and understood by your government. I look forward to meeting you soon and working together on federal policies that address the needs of Albertans and all Canadians.

Sincerely,



Josephine Pon
Minister of Seniors and Housing

cc: Honourable Jason Kenney
Premier of Alberta