

Office of the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
140 Promenade du Portage  
Phase IV, 14th Floor  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0J2

13 September 2017

Dear Minister Duclos:

We are writing to you as the national women's shelter association along with our member provincial and territorial shelter associations to urge you to **reinstate the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP)**. The SEP, previously housed at CMHC, was dismantled in 2011. The Fund was cancelled despite the fact that it had been positively evaluated by a third party in 2009. At that time, the study noted that "the SEP approach to funding family violence shelters is a cost-effective way to address family violence. Past research has shown that each dollar spent on family violence shelters results in net savings in costs for health services, justice and social services."

Since 2011, funds provided to shelters have been rolled into the Investment in Affordable Housing Fund. We greatly appreciate the \$89.9 million that was provided for shelter enhancement in the 2016 budget. However, as you know, some of the provinces are taking longer than others to redistribute the funds and each of the three territories only received \$500,000 despite the fact that the cost of renovation is much higher as are the rates of violence against women. Having a dedicated SEP housed at CMHC would in our opinion deal with these issues.

Reinstating the SEP within the National Housing Fund of the National Housing Strategy (NHS) would directly respond to the request made by the Prime Minister in his 2015 Mandate letter to the Minister of Status of Women which is to **support the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs in ensuring that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn by growing and maintaining Canada's network of shelters and transition houses**. It would also send a strong signal that the NHS is incorporating a gender-based approach.

We strongly feel that the reinstatement of the SEP would also accomplish the following:

- increase the level of transparency in terms of how and when funds are disbursed;
- allow the government to take a leadership role and to begin to ensure that women fleeing violence in all regions of the country have access to comparable levels of services; and



- by decreasing the levels of transfers (from Federal to Provincial/Territorial), the funding amount provided to shelters will be greater and the amount of time to disburse would likely be reduced. This will create an efficient and streamlined funding allotment process.

With the reinstatement of the SEP, we are proposing that 10% of the National Housing Fund be earmarked for this purpose. This amounts to approximately \$50 million per year. Over a 10 year timeline, this amounts to \$500 million. As in most public housing stock across the country, a significant percentage of shelters are in dire need of renovations. Also, a number of regions in the country are not adequately served, notably remote areas including the North and on-reserve for Aboriginal women.

We recognize the work that the government is doing in developing a National Housing Strategy, a Poverty Reduction Strategy and a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Strategy. The potential to make real change in the lives of Canada's most vulnerable populations will in part depend on how these three strategies build on one another. Reinstating the Shelter Enhancement program is definitely a step in this direction as it links the NHS with the GBV Strategy and ultimately has an impact on reducing poverty for a group of very vulnerable women.

We thank you for the time and attention that is being given to these issues.

Sincerely,

Lise Martin  
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Women's Shelters Canada

Lyda Fuller  
Executive Director  
YWCA Northwest Territories

Joanne Baker  
Executive Director  
BC Society of Transition  
Houses

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Cc:

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister  
Hon. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs  
Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
Hon. Scott Brison, President of the Treasury Board  
Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development  
Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance  
Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice, Attorney General of Canada  
Hon. Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services  
Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport  
Hon. Kent Hehr, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities  
Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities  
Hon. Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women  
Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour  
Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health  
Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Associate Minister of National Defence  
Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie  
Hon. Jim Carr, Minister of Natural Resources  
Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage  
Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, Minister of National Revenue  
Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of National Defence  
Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement  
Hon. Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science  
Hon. Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism  
Hon. Karina Gould, Minister of Democratic Institutions  
Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade  
Adam Vaughan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs)  
Sean Casey, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage