



Aboriginal Housing Management Association

AHMA calls on the Province to honour UNDRIP by empowering Indigenous Housing Providers to deliver Indigenous Housing projects and decolonize the development process

Provincial Budget 2020 reveals lowest areas of housing progress in British Columbia has been building housing for Indigenous Peoples

For Immediate Release

Squamish Nation Territory/West Vancouver (February 20, 2020) The British Columbian Provincial Budget that was announced on Tuesday February 18, 2020 raised some concerns to all Indigenous Housing Providers in British Columbia. The budget's zero increase in investments in Indigenous housing paired with BC Housing's new service plan that puts boundaries on their cooperation with AHMA, can only worsen the Urban and Rural Indigenous housing crisis.

After analyzing the delivery of the 2019 budget, the slowest area of progress for housing has been building housing for Indigenous Peoples. If the Province is truly committed to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), they must supply adequate funding, resources for the Indigenous communities and Indigenous housing providers to be self-determined, sustainable and be able to raise the housing standards. "We need more funding and research grants to close the housing and health gap for our community in core housing need which isn't noted in the budget. This includes our elders, youth aging out of care, women fleeing violence and low-income families. Research grants would allow for the Indigenous community to get the data and planning tools needed to develop more housing and programming. In regard to the slow progress, the development process needs to be decolonized, we need to be mindful and respectful that our diverse communities operate differently" said Sarah Silva, Manager of Operations, AHMA.

Additionally, the Province needs to engage with the Indigenous communities and AHMA members, who consist of one third of all Indigenous Housing providers in Canada when creating housing programs in British Columbia. "The province should capitalize on their partnership with AHMA, with over 25 years grassroots experience plus, our providers average nearly 50 years in the whole spectrum of housing, we are ideally placed to take a lead in working with Indigenous leaders and BC Housing to get these projects fast tracked. The province needs to empower AHMA to play that role. Indigenous housing related issues require Indigenous solutions" said Margaret Pfoh, CEO of AHMA.

AHMA does acknowledge and raise our hands to the past efforts made by the Provincial Government. In 2018 AHMA, in partnership with the Provincial Government made history by announcing the Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund (IHF). Dedicating \$550 million toward 1,750 homes over a decade. It marked the first time a province in Canada had ever provided funding for Indigenous housing both on and off reserve. However, with no increase in funding for the previously announced IHF 10-year plan, the capital and operating cost related to the approved projects are rapidly increasing. By the time construction starts, the previously forecasted and approved costs are no longer valid and require a funding boost.



Aboriginal Housing Management Association

Furthermore, there is the growing issue regarding the exploding property insurance rates that threaten the sustainability of the whole social housing sector especially the new projects that don't receive government operating subsidy. AHMA is extremely concerned that 2020 Budget did not touch on these topics and urges our provincial government to intervene.

We are committed to help our Provincial Minister and BC Housing meet their mandates but in order to truly honour Bill 41- BC's New UNDRIP Legislation, the Provincial government must recognize Indigenous peoples' right to housing as enshrined in the UNDRIP. Without proper funding and acknowledgement within the Provincial Budget towards Indigenous Housing the provincial government is failing to uphold and truly honour Bill 41. Only through meaningful inclusion and engagement with AHMA and our 41 members can the social, economic, and Indigenous rights of urban and rural Indigenous peoples be claimed and protected in relation to housing adequacy and Indigenous self-determination rights per UNDRIP.

-30-

Background

- The Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund is an investment of \$550 million over the next 10 years to build and operate 1,750 new units of social housing both on- and off-reserve. AHMA is developing the housing in partnership with BC Housing, Indigenous housing societies and First Nations. In addition, Indigenous organizations and First Nations can access provincial support under all the new housing funds announced as part of Building BC.

- AHMA urges the province to honour UNDRIP in its full capacity as our organization maintains a strong relationship with the UN Special Rapporteur on right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha. Margaret Pfoh, AHMA CEO, attended a strategic meeting between leaders from Indigenous communities across Canada, urban Indigenous housing and homelessness service providers, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha (the Rapporteur). Following the release of the Rapporteur's latest report – on the Right to Housing of Indigenous Peoples – to the United Nations General Assembly, the Rapporteur called this meeting to discuss the following:
 - The housing conditions of urban Indigenous people in Canada
 - The right to adequate housing for urban Indigenous people
 - The need for a national urban Indigenous housing strategy

The result of that strategic meeting was a joint statement in the sincere hope that urban Indigenous housing conditions and homelessness are prioritized in the federal government's implementation of the National Housing Strategy, as a matter of human



Aboriginal Housing Management Association

rights and consistent with the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Read full statement here: <https://bit.ly/3bQRJZo>

For further information, or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Laurie Brownrigg Media & Communications

PH: 778-228-6438

Email: lbrownrigg@ahma-bc.org

About the Aboriginal Housing Management Association AHMA is an umbrella organization composed of 41 Members that are each Indigenous Housing providers. Our members represent over 5000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural and northern regions of British Columbia. We are direct partners with the provincial government and a leading voice that supports, advocates and responds to the needs of our Indigenous Housing Providers and the Indigenous communities they serve. AHMA is the first Indigenous Housing Authority in Canada and only second in the world and we were created for Indigenous communities by Indigenous communities.