



January 15, 2024

Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Kahlon:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Minister of Housing. I trust in your leadership at this critical time to deliver results for the people of British Columbia.

British Columbians continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate related natural disasters, while global inflation is driving up costs for more households and the world's economic outlook is concerning. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a secure, low emission, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether you live in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. We will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together.

Our government is committed to delivering on the mandate British Columbians gave us in 2020. Together we can make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations.

As we renew our work, my priority as Premier is to deliver results that people can see and feel in four key areas:

- **Attainable and affordable housing:** In the wake of soaring prices and record migration to B.C., we will take on the important work of building new homes that are actually attainable for the middle class, while continuing our work to address the housing crisis for those in distress on our streets.

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- **Safer communities:** To address concerns about public safety, both for the people struggling with mental health and addiction on our streets, as well as the feeling that downtown centres are not as safe as they were before the pandemic, we will work with our partners at all levels of government, the justice and health care systems, the non-profit sector, and community leaders to find solutions for this complex challenge facing our province, and work overtime to seize the assets of high-level criminals.
- **Improved health care:** Amid unprecedented pressures we will continue to work to strengthen our public health care system, from family doctors to new hospitals, so care is there for each of us when we need it.
- **A sustainable, clean, secure, and fair economy:** We will continue our work investing in British Columbians, fighting racism and promoting equity, and building a clean economy that addresses our obligations to combat climate change by driving down emissions, while creating good, family supporting jobs.

Few issues are as central to our government's goal of ensuring British Columbia is a place where everyone can make a home as the need for housing itself. Our province is growing quickly – 100,000 people moved here last year, setting a 50-year record. This year, we expect similar growth. Coupled with seniors looking for affordable homes, young people looking to leave their parents' home and start life independently, and people moving to smaller communities to work remotely, demand for housing has never been higher in our province – and supply is not keeping up. We need more housing of all kinds, and urgently, but we can't do it alone. This work will require the partnership of municipalities, the federal government, First Nations, non-profit organizations, private landlords, tenants, community members, and homebuilders. Our government has already led unprecedented affordable and social housing initiatives, and yet we need to do more.

Historically, governments used to build housing for the middle class. Building homes for soldiers returning from war and their families was the start of the federal housing agency: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Tax credits drove the building of rental housing across the province through federal programs. Co-ops were funded through innovative programs fifty years ago – but now their leases are coming up.

While expanding our work to build housing for those living in the parks and on the sidewalks in our communities, we must take strong steps to get involved in delivering attainable middle-class housing for families who call our province home, for those who want to call our province home, for the people who make our province run every day, and for the seniors who helped build our province. We will face challenges in this work, but people expect us to do even more, and we must deliver for them.

Since 2020, our government has made considerable progress on important initiatives including:

- Ongoing delivery of the 10-year housing plan to build more affordable housing, including investing \$2 billion in Housing Hub projects to build more affordable housing, passing the Housing Supply Act and amendments to the Strata Property Act to make sure housing keeps up with our growing population, capping annual rent increases below inflation, and preventing renovictions.
- Providing additional funding in Budget 2022 to prevent and address homelessness.

As a new ministry with responsibility to oversee delivery of our government's work on these important files, over the remaining period of this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- Lead work to deliver the refreshed housing strategy with new initiatives that build on work already underway in urban, rural, remote and Indigenous communities. This strategy should:
 - Establish BC Builds to build housing for middle-income families, individuals, and seniors;
 - Ensure timely resolution of landlord/tenant disputes;
 - With support from the Minister of Finance, establish a rental housing acquisition fund;
 - Introduce legislation establishing new tools for local governments to help them better regulate short term rentals in their communities;
 - Introduce laws to legalize secondary suites province-wide and expand the number of units allowed to be built in cities using single-family home development permit processes; and
 - Include an effective flipping tax to fight increased costs caused by short-term flipping by investors.
- Work with Indigenous partners to identify and deliver on Indigenous housing priorities for the province.
- With support from the Minister of Municipal Affairs, lead work across government to simplify and speed up provincial housing approval processes, working toward 'one-stop' provincial permitting – and support municipalities to streamline development approvals through the continued implementation of the Development Approvals Process Review.
- Implement the Housing Supply Act and work with municipalities facing the highest housing needs to set housing targets and fast-track construction and redevelopment of affordable homes for people with a range of incomes.

- Lead government's work to better coordinate services to deliver improved outcomes for people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, with support from the Ministers of Mental Health and Addictions, Health, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and Public Safety and Solicitor General, as well as Indigenous Peoples, external partners, and others.
- Expand on the new homelessness supports launched in Budget 2022, including long-term housing to address encampments.
- Support the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to implement transit-oriented development to advance sustainable communities along transit corridors to help achieve our housing and affordability goals, including targets for non-market units and non-profit housing.

Our work together must continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated by this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of Cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual Cabinet and Treasury Board oversight and include measurable outcomes for British Columbians. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by Cabinet.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the public good. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships both with title holders and through public and stakeholder engagement plans that incorporate diverse perspectives early in the policy development process. Federal partnerships and resources will be particularly important and, on behalf of our government, you will engage with the federal government on advancing priorities to improve the lives of British Columbians.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the Members' Conflict of Interest Act. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The rural and urban challenges that we face are urgent and complex. In response, we must be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines and old divisions

in new ways. Labour shortages are a major issue globally, and British Columbia is no exception, including in the public service. Maintaining the BC Public Service as an employer of excellence will be key to retaining and recruiting the diverse professionals we rely on to deliver essential services, advice, and analysis.

At the core of this work is listening and responding to the priorities of people in B.C. Together, we can deliver results in very real ways – ways that people can see, feel, and touch, and that change their lives for the better. Thank you for doing this important work with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Eby", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

David Eby, KC
Premier