HS-C2-1

January 5, 2011	REFERRAL TO RECOMMENDED	
	DIRECTION REQUIRED	
	RECEIPT RECOMMENDED	ONPHA

Ms. Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services
Region of Peel & Peel Living
10 Peel Centre Drive
Suite A, 6th Floor
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9

Dear Ms. Menard;

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES				
COPY TO:		FOR:		
Chair	V	Committee		
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Corporate Services		Council	Ш	
Public Works				
Employee and Business Services Jan 27/11 R.C.				
Health Services		File		
Human Services	V	<u> </u>		
Peel Living	1 -	l	1	

Ontario

Association

Non-Profit Housing

RE: Ensuring Funding for Housing and Human Services

As you know, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) has been serving the interests of community-based municipal and private non-profit housing providers in Ontario for over 20 years. ONPHA's membership includes over 755 non-profit providers that house over 400,000 people in 220 communities across Ontario. ONPHA's members serve diverse tenant populations in attractive, well integrated homes, including: seniors, low-income families, people living with developmental disabilities, mental illness, various other challenges, and the formerly homeless.

Since housing was devolved to municipalities in 2000, ONPHA has long been concerned about the challenges municipalities have faced following the full or partial downloading of programs such as social housing and social assistance benefits. Along with municipalities, ONPHA has shared the view that the shift from provincial funding to a reliance on the municipal property tax base created an unacceptable financial burden on municipalities. At the same time, the Province's Social Housing Reform Act created a prescriptive relationship between the Province and Service Managers, limiting local flexibility and in some instances impeding local decision-making.

Along with municipal Service Managers, ONPHA has consistently addressed these concerns in our consultations with the Province. We continue to advocate for stable, predictable, and adequate funding for affordable housing and human services and strongly support a flexible

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legislative and regulatory framework that will enable communities to develop, fund and implement locally-based housing solutions that meet their changing needs and circumstances.

We are pleased that the Province has begun to work with municipalities to address these challenges through the 2008 Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) and the new Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS). We believe that the upload of the Ontario Disability Benefits Program, the Ontario Drug Benefit, Ontario Works benefits and Court Services will relieve much of the burden on the municipal property tax base when it is fully implemented in 2018.

We welcome the agreement between the Province, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the City of Toronto to recognize that housing is a local issue best addressed by local solutions. The Province's new LTAHS and accompanying legislation affirms this principle, supporting local planning and reducing restrictions on decision-making.

Unfortunately, neither the PMFSDR nor the LTAHS includes dedicated provincial funding for social housing. According to the final PMFSDR report, and confirmed by our discussions with provincial government officials, municipalities are required to continue carrying financial responsibility for social housing, with the expectation that savings from the uploaded programs will create "cost room" to fund this area.

ONPHA and municipal Service Managers agree that community-based non-profit housing represents valuable public assets which play a pivotal role in building healthy, sustainable communities. These assets contribute to economic competitiveness, public health, and social well-being, providing cost-effective, safe, livable and affordable homes for the long-term and enabling residents to participate more fully in their communities. In short, investing in community-based non-profit housing has and will yield huge returns of benefit to all.

ONPHA's members and their tenants rely on a secure flow of sufficient funds to ensure housing remains truly affordable, financially viable, and that supports are available to those who need them. Common sense tells us that it will be far cheaper to protect the investments already made through adequately funded capital repairs, than to be forced to replace prematurely worn out properties. And ONPHA is well aware of the growing and increasingly complex pressures Service Managers face from people who have not been able yet to gain access to suitable, affordable housing – housing that is an essential foundation for the successful development and delivery of an array of human services. Municipal Service Managers, in turn, similarly require appropriate budgets to be set by municipal councils that enable them to fulfill their responsibilities.

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To that end, ONPHA's members passed a resolution at the 2010 ONPHA Annual General Meeting calling on Service Managers to commit permanent and adequate funding for housing and human services, using the cost room created by the uploading of social assistance benefit programs. We understand that some Service Managers have already done this, and that others may be planning to do so as part of upcoming municipal budget discussions.

If neither staff nor Council has yet considered this issue, ONPHA would be happy to assist with appropriate support for report development and presentation.

Sincerely,

Keith Ward President Sharad Kerur

Executive Director

cc. Clerk, Regional Municipality of Peel

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REGION OF PEEL CLERKS DEPT.