



September 21, 2026

Reference: 193624

Cliff McNeil-Smith
Chair
Capital Regional District Board
PO Box 1000
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria BC V8W 2S6
Email: cmcneilsmith@crd.bc.ca

Dear Chair McNeil-Smith:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 20, 2026, addressed to the Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Finance and myself, regarding provincially funded rent supplement programs in British Columbia. I am pleased to respond and apologize for the delay in responding.

The Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs recognizes the pressures facing British Columbians and the housing sector due to current economic conditions and provincial budget constraints. I acknowledge and appreciate the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board of Directors' letter of support for maintaining and strengthening provincial programs which provide rental assistance in the private market.

The Province is working to boost the supply of housing for people and crack down on speculation in the market, so that renters can afford to live in the community they call home. Since 2017, we have been working hard to bring down housing costs and protect renters, through actions like:

- Reducing annual allowable rent increases,
- Reining in surging short-term rentals,
- Taking steps to deter and prevent bad-faith evictions,
- Supporting the creation of Canada's first provincewide rent bank, and
- Enhancing supports through rental assistance programs.

With regard to rent subsidies, in 2026/2027, the Province estimates to spend \$221 million on rental assistance, including \$50 million on the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) to help a projected 6,000 households and \$115 million on the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program to help over 26,000 senior households. This reflects the \$75 million in increased funding provided through Budget 2025.

Provincial investments also support the Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) and Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), that provide outreach services and rent supplements to people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness that support over 3,300 recipients.

In 2018, a 10-year bilateral agreement was signed with the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) committing more than \$1.6 billion to the Province for various housing and homelessness programs, including the provincially cost-matched Canada-BC Housing Benefit (CBCHB). The CBCHB provides monthly financial rent assistance to priority groups with low incomes, including women and children experiencing or at risk of domestic violence, Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, veterans, youth leaving care, people with disabilities, and people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In 2025, a further \$37 million investment over four years, with the Province of BC providing an equal cost match, was introduced to fund a Gender Based Violence (SGBV) CBCHB rent supplement stream. CBCHB supports approximately 5,000 households.

Additionally, in March 2026, the Province announced an additional payment to BC Rent Bank (BCRB), a housing stability and homelessness prevention resource providing micro-loans to people who are experiencing a short-term financial crisis that jeopardizes their housing.

As part of the historic \$19 billion housing investment by the BC Government, the Province has more than 95,000 homes delivered or underway, including more than 8,400 homes in the CRD. These include a total of 478 affordable, family-oriented rental homes with the opening of the Caledonia in Victoria, with 158 new affordable homes. Construction is underway on two additional developments in Saanich and Central Saanich that will deliver another 320 more homes.

At the same time, the Province continues to tie the annual allowable rent increase to inflation at 2.2 percent in 2027, down from 2.3 percent in 2026. With our work to increase housing supply, regulate short-term rentals and limit foreign investment in the housing market, British Columbia has seen a 4.5 percent decrease in overall average rents.

I appreciate the ongoing partnership of the CRD with BC Housing and the Province and value our continued collaboration on housing issues affecting the region. Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Boyle', with a large, stylized 'C' and a long, sweeping underline.

Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs