

2010 Government Relations Report

In 2010, CHF Canada's lobbying efforts continued to promote the key priorities of housing co-ops to federal and provincial governments across the country. These efforts were greatly aided by support from regional federations and individual housing co-ops.

Here are some of the highlights:

FEDERAL:

In Ottawa, CHF Canada called for the federal government to:

- 1. Ensure that cost-shared federal dollars reduce housing need by getting the provinces and territories to create new affordable housing, including co-op homes;**
- 2. Take action to maintain rent-geared-to-income (RGI) subsidies for low-income households after operating agreements end; and**
- 3. Authorize CMHC's Direct Lending Program to help co-ops get funding for capital projects.**

Parliament Hill

CHF Canada's lobbying efforts on Parliament Hill aimed to get MPs to support co-ops' key federal issues. Lobbying ranged from setting up co-op tours for MPs to participating in important parliamentary studies such as the House of Commons Finance Committee's 2011 federal budget consultation.

Over the year, several meetings took place with staff of the Minister Responsible for CMHC, Diane Finley, to discuss CHF Canada's proposal to expand CMHC's Direct Lending Program for federal co-ops. In December 2009, the Finance Committee's report unanimously supported CHF Canada's recommendation, and asked that the federal government take a closer look at it.

In November, the House of Commons Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee released a new report on poverty titled *Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership towards Reducing Poverty in Canada*. This report includes testimony from CHF Canada and outlines the rising trends of poverty in Canada, including the increasing challenge many Canadians face in securing affordable housing.

Media

CHF Canada contributed to media releases for the federal social housing stimulus program by thanking the federal government for providing co-ops with \$150 million in grants for needed renovations and repairs. Federal media releases featured supportive statements from CHF Canada's Executive Director, Nicholas Gazzard; President, Wes Hosler; former President, Ken Elliott and Ontario Regional Director, Patrick Newman. For example, a July 8 funding announcement for 48 co-ops in the Greater Toronto Area included a key quote from CHF Canada's President.

“We congratulate and thank the federal government, MP [for Burlington] [Mike] Wallace and CMHC for making a sound investment to help ensure that this affordable community is preserved as a legacy for the long-term benefit of its residents. Today’s announcement is an excellent example of stimulus funding that works towards preserving jobs, assisting the local economy, and protecting valuable affordable housing assets for Canadians.”

CHF Canada defended co-ops across Canada in national and local newspapers. For example a letter in the March 12, 2010 issue of the *Globe and Mail* refuted a columnist claiming that Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson’s support for new co-op housing was a waste of time.

Public Forums

Staff attended meetings hosted by the federal Liberal and NDP opposition parties on housing, homelessness and poverty-related issues. In November, CHF Canada supported a town hall in Toronto on the federal government’s role in Canada’s affordable housing crisis. The Alliance for Affordable Co-op Housing, a local group, was one of the organizers of the successful event. David Granovsky, Government Relations Co-ordinator, took part in a community housing and homelessness forum in March with local co-op supporters from Halam Park Housing Co-op and the Golden Horseshoe Co-op Federation in NDP MP Chris Charlton’s Hamilton-area riding.

Stakeholder groups

Key relationships with stakeholder groups were sustained with the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). In 2011, CHF Canada and these groups will continue to work together to find ways to maintain RGI subsidies for low-income Canadians, including the working poor and seniors on fixed incomes, living in co-op, non-profit and municipal housing in Canada.

PROVINCIAL:

Nova Scotia

CHF Canada continued to work with the Nova Scotia government on important issues such as protecting the non-profit status of co-ops, keeping subsidies for low-income households, and building on the successful North End United Housing Co-operative merger. In January, the province's newest and largest co-op received \$3.1 million in stimulus funding from the provincial and federal governments for energy retrofits.

Manitoba

A landmark meeting was held in September for Manitoba's housing co-ops. Some of the key issues that were raised at "the 2010 Housing Co-op Summit: Planning a Successful Future for your Co-op" focused on fixing gaps in volunteer and management training, and maintaining provincial subsidy dollars after operating agreements end.

Annex - Federal Meetings and Events in 2010

Meetings with federal officials

Date and Location	Official	Subject
February 4, 2010 Ottawa, ON	Aron Seal, Policy Advisor for the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Jim Flaherty (Conservative MP for Whitby—Oshawa, ON)	Direct Lending
May 5, 2010 Ottawa, ON	Jim Miller, Director of Policy for the Minister responsible for CMHC, the Honourable Diane Finley (Conservative MP for Haldimand—Norfolk, ON)	Direct Lending
May 19, 2010 Ottawa, ON	Jim Miller, Director of Policy for the Minister responsible for CMHC, the Honourable Diane Finley (Conservative MP for Haldimand—Norfolk, ON)	Direct Lending
July 7, 2010 Ottawa, ON	Jim Miller, Director of Policy for the Minister responsible for CMHC, the Honourable Diane Finley (Conservative MP for Haldimand—Norfolk, ON)	Direct Lending

Meetings with MPs

Date and Location	MP	Subject(s)
July 22, 2010 Beaver Creek Housing Co-op Waterloo, ON	Peter Braid, Conservative MP for Kitchener—Waterloo (ON)	End of RGI Subsidies and Direct Lending
September 8, 2010 Frank G. McLoughlin Co-op Brampton, ON	Andrew Kania, Liberal MP for Brampton West (ON)	End of RGI Subsidies
September 28, 2010 Ottawa, ON	The Honourable John Baird, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Conservative MP for Ottawa West—Nepean (ON)	Direct Lending
October 18, 2010 Ottawa, ON	The Honourable John McCallum, Liberal Housing Critic and Liberal MP for Markham—Unionville (ON)	End of RGI Subsidies, Accountability Framework and Direct Lending

Federal Events

Date and Location	Event
<p>January 25, 2010</p> <p>Ottawa, ON</p>	<p>Attended a Liberal forum on Parliament Hill: “Investing in People: A Discussion on Poverty and Homelessness.”</p>
<p>February 19, 2010</p> <p>Barrie, ON</p>	<p>Attended and spoke at CMHC stimulus funding announcement for social housing in Northern Ontario at Three Links Co-operative Housing.</p> <p>Held in Conservative MP Patrick Brown’s federal riding of Barrie (ON).</p>
<p>March 12, 2010</p> <p>Hamilton, ON</p>	<p>Participated in a local roundtable forum on housing and homelessness. Hosted by Chris Charlton, NDP MP for Hamilton Mountain (ON); invited guest Libby Davies, NDP Housing Critic and MP for Vancouver East (BC).</p>
<p>March 15, 2010</p> <p>Peterborough, ON</p>	<p>Attended and spoke at a CMHC stimulus announcement funding at Kawartha Village Co-operative Homes.</p> <p>Held in Conservative MP Dean Del Mastro’s federal riding of Peterborough (ON).</p>
<p>June 20, 2010</p> <p>Vancouver, BC</p>	<p>Participated in a Liberal Party Policy Conference, which featured a housing panel discussion.</p>
<p>July 8, 2010</p> <p>Toronto, ON</p>	<p>Attended a CMHC stimulus funding announcement for social housing in the Greater Toronto Area at Rouge Valley Co-op Homes.</p>
<p>August 12, 2010</p> <p>St. Catharines, ON</p>	<p>Attended a joint federal-provincial-municipal stimulus funding announcement for social housing in the Niagara Region and Hamilton at Commonwealth Co-operative Homes.</p>
<p>October 25, 2010</p> <p>Ottawa, ON</p>	<p>Testified at a House of Commons Finance Committee 2011 federal budget consultation meeting.</p>

November 25, 2010 Winnipeg, MB	Co-hosted a meet and greet at Willow Park East Housing Co-op Ltd. for November 29 federal by-election in the riding of Winnipeg North.
November 26, 2010 Vancouver, BC	Attended and spoke at CMHC stimulus funding announcement for social housing in Vancouver at Kanata Co-operative Housing Association.