



**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**

**UPLOAD**  
co-op housing

SPECIAL BULLETIN MARCH 2007 – No. 1

## Send a Message to Queen's Park

**Uniting Ontario's housing co-ops under the Agency's umbrella helps solve the "who does what" puzzle.**

A big opportunity has opened up for housing co-ops in Ontario and we need your co-op's help to take advantage of it.

A provincial-municipal review of service delivery means we have a one-time chance to

- fix some of the biggest problems facing our provincial co-ops
- bring all of Ontario's housing co-ops together under one roof at the Agency for Co-operative Housing.

### **The government review**

Pressure has been building on the Ontario government to give municipalities some relief from the costs of downloaded special programs.

Last August, Premier McGuinty announced a provincial-municipal service review to look at which level of government should deliver and pay for a range of services in Ontario, including co-op and non-profit housing. The review is led jointly by the Province and the municipal sector.

This review – officially called the Fiscal and Service Delivery Review – gives us the opening we have been looking for to win meaningful changes to the *Social Housing Reform Act*. What's more, it gives us a real chance to bring housing co-ops in Ontario together under the Agency for Co-operative Housing administration.

And the timing of this fall's provincial election couldn't be better, because we can get the attention of all the political parties and win support for our proposal.

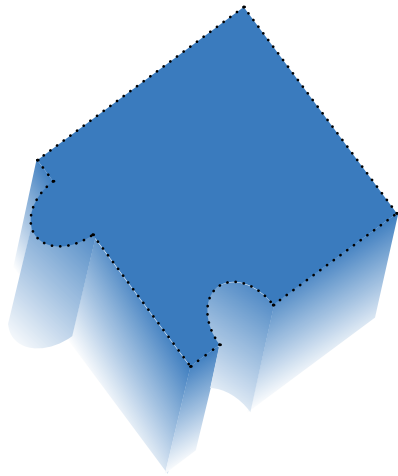
To get our campaign rolling, we have made an innovative proposal to the Province and municipalities that would reshape the co-op housing sector in Ontario.

## Inside

**Our proposal.** Now is the time to bring housing co-ops in Ontario together under the Agency for Co-operative Housing.

**Take action.** Write to Premier McGuinty and meet with your local MPP.





## **Our proposal to unite Ontario co-ops**

Our proposal calls on the Ontario government to:

- upload municipally administered co-ops to the provincial level
- amend the rules in the *Social Housing Reform Act* to create a more effective program for housing co-ops, and
- enter into an agreement with the Agency for Co-operative Housing for program administration.

This is our second attempt to bring Ontario-program co-ops under Agency administration. In 1999 we mounted a lobby to have provincial co-ops uploaded to the federal level, then on to the Agency when it opened for business. We won some political support but couldn't get the federal government on side.

Now we have a second chance – and the timing looks good. The Agency is a go, and it has said it is ready to take on the administration of provincial co-ops under contract with the Ontario government. And it's the right thing to do – for the co-ops, for the Province and for municipalities.

## **Selling our proposal**

Our goal is to make sure that our Agency proposal is seriously considered. The Fiscal and Service Delivery Review will look at a wide range of options for fixing “who does what – and who pays for what”. We want to make the short list, and that means an all-out effort from housing co-ops across Ontario.

## **Here's where your co-op comes in**

We know that personal letters from constituents are one of the best ways to get the attention of politicians. So the Premier, Cabinet members and MPPs need to hear in writing from every co-op in the province - provincial and federal – that our upload proposal is a winner for everyone involved.

For now we are focusing our campaign at the provincial level. You will hear more from us later about how we can also win support at the municipal level.

## **Write today**

Attached to this Bulletin are some sample ideas on what to say in your letter. Remember though that it is important to put your thoughts in your own words as much as possible and to make your letter more personal by talking a little about your own co-op. That way your letter will be more original and will be taken more seriously.

## **Who to write to**

Your letter should be addressed to Premier McGuinty with a copy to the key players noted below.

First, send a copy to the Minister of Finance, Greg Sorbara and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, John Gerretsen. They are leading the Review on the provincial side. Their views will be key when Premier McGuinty and the Cabinet make their decision on changes to be made – including our upload proposal.

Then send a copy of the letter to your local MPP. They need to know that you support the uploading proposal and have written to these decision-makers about it. MPPs from all three parties can add their support and apply their own pressure at Queen's Park.

Finally, don't forget that we need a copy of your letter to the Premier in the Ontario Region office so that we can track how the campaign is building across the province. Also, be sure to send us a copy of any responses you receive.

## Step one

<p>Fax, or mail, your letter right away to the Premier:</p>	<p>Then send a copy of the letter to the following people:</p>				
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Premier, the Honourable Dalton McGuinty Queen's Park, Main Legislative Building, Room 281 Toronto, ON M7A 1A1</p> <p><b>Fax: 416-325-3745</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Minister of Finance, the Honourable Greg Sorbara 7 Queen's Park Cres. 7th Floor Frost Building South Toronto ON M7A 1Y7</p> <p><b>Fax: 416-212-1025</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Minister of Municipal Affairs &amp; Housing, the Honourable John Gerretsen 777 Bay St. 17th Floor Toronto, ON M5G 2E5</p> <p><b>Fax: 416-585-6470</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Your local MPP  (their address and constituency office fax number are attached)</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Harvey Cooper CHF Canada, Ontario Region 720 Spadina Avenue, #313 Toronto, ON M5S 2T9</p> <p><b>Fax: 416-366-3876</b></p>	

## Step two

### **Meet your MPP**

Once you have written your letters, it is time to set up a meeting with your MPP about our uploading proposal. Lots of co-op members have already built a relationship with their MPP through earlier meetings.

Most MPPs, particularly in an election year, will want to be supportive of issues of concern to their constituents. It is easier, of course, to win their support if what you are asking for is good public policy.

We have a strong case to make that our proposal is good not only for co-ops but for the Province and municipal governments as well. It helps government solve a piece of the "who does what" puzzle and gives co-ops a more secure future.

Here are the key selling points for our proposal:

- It offers the Ontario government a cost-effective way to give municipalities some financial relief and does not require them to take on program administration again.
- Municipalities get substantial cost savings from the upload of the co-op portfolio and get rid of future liabilities.
- Co-ops get a better program and are united with other co-ops under Agency administration.

take action

www.chfcanada.coop



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#### **More information**

For tips on how to set up a meeting with your MPP go to the new Stronger Together campaign section in the Ontario Region pages of our website at [www.chfcanada.coop](http://www.chfcanada.coop).

You will also find lots of other information on the campaign including our submission to the Province, a brochure for MPP meetings and information on the Fiscal and Service Delivery Review.

#### **Contact us**

Questions? Need help drafting your letters or organizing a meeting with your MPP?

Please call your **local federation** or Harvey Cooper (x 237) or Andrew Noble (x 239) at the **Ontario Region** at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: [hcooper@chfc.ca](mailto:hcooper@chfc.ca) or [anoble@chfc.ca](mailto:anoble@chfc.ca).

