

**Ministry of  
Municipal Affairs  
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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23 April 2020

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hussen:

I hope that this letter finds you well, and your family in good health.

As we have learned over the past number of weeks, collaboration among all governments has been essential in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. In recognition of the important work our governments have undertaken together to support Canadian businesses and households, I am writing today to propose further efforts to ensure households continue to receive the help they need during these unprecedented times.

Firstly, I would like to commend you for bringing forward plans for the cost-shared Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program. Ontario applauds this initiative and is committed to supporting it.

As Ontario works to implement this important joint initiative, I am mindful that announcements about assistance for commercial renters will understandably prompt renewed focus on the need for similar measures for residential renters. Although many households are benefiting from the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit, for those households that reside in areas of the country experiencing relatively high rents, there will still be difficult choices to make. We have heard from both tenants and housing providers that too many households continue to struggle with paying their rents.

As we are all aware, housing is an important determinant of health. In this fight against COVID-19, keeping families at home has been our primary defence against its spread. The rental housing market in Ontario is made up of over 1.6 million households – over 30 per cent of all households in the province. When these families are forced to choose between food and rent, it also impacts Ontario landlords and the stability of our rental housing sector. With the May 1 rent payment due in a matter of days, we want to work with you to maintain the resiliency of the rental housing market now and in the future.

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That is why I am asking the federal government to provide additional support for residential renters and for Canada's residential rental market. The Ontario government would be available to support the development of a residential rental relief program; however, considering its potential magnitude and its national importance, we feel that the federal government is best placed to provide this support by leveraging existing initiatives.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing collaboration. I look forward to discussing this matter further at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark  
Minister

- c. The Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, Government of Ontario  
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, Government of Canada