

Hon. Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

December 8, 2022

Dear Minister Kahlon,

Re: Reiterating the need for immediate response to winter shelter crisis in Salmon Arm

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Housing Minister. During such a critical time for housing in our province, I wish you the best as you work towards making sure all British Columbians have access to safe, reliable and more affordable housing.

I am writing to you regarding the urgent matter of a lack of overnight shelter for the unhoused community in Salmon Arm.

Seven months ago, the Salvation Army Lighthouse in Shuswap, which provided overnight winter shelter for the homeless, was shut down. Since then, there has been no plan or alternative presented by the provincial government or BC Housing to prevent the unacceptable situation that is forcing people to sleep on the streets in below-freezing temperatures.

The former Minister responsible for Housing, along with representatives of BC Housing, met with me two weeks ago and said the lack of available property is the reason why some folks in Salmon Arm are still having to sleep outside in the extreme cold. In an effort to help, my office quickly identified two appropriately-sized properties in Salmon Arm as possible temporary shelters, and checked that the landowners have been in touch with BC Housing regarding a short-term lease. Additionally, I identified short-term accommodation units that can be deployed within a few days and operational within a week. As BC Housing is aware, CMHA Salmon Arm is willing to operate such accommodation.

Despite compiling and sharing this information with the Ministry and with BC Housing through multiple letters and calls, there has been no proactive effort to provide me with updates on any progress, or lack thereof. Unhoused people in Salmon Arm are still sleeping outside on the streets. Seven months have gone by, and yet the government has failed to present a plan or alternatives to address this crisis, leaving vulnerable people at risk of serious injury and even death.

This situation is simply inhumane and appalling. There is no excuse for the crisis to continue. We have identified solutions to address the government's reasoning for its failure to ensure unhoused



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people in Salmon Arm have the shelter, warmth and dignity they deserve. This situation requires immediate urgency.

I am happy to meet with you, your staff and BC Housing representatives to discuss the possible solutions I have previously outlined. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Greg Kylo
MLA for Shuswap

CC: Karin Kirkpatrick, MLA for West Vancouver-Capilano and Shadow Minister for Housing and Childcare