

north shore news

LETTER: Federal cash needed in housing solution

North Shore News

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Dear Editor:

Many people on the North Shore, including, no doubt, some councillors and some developers, will heartily approve of the editorial All Things Old about the loss of below-market rental housing on the North Shore (in the June 21 edition).

For years now community groups like the Community Housing Action Committee and Housers.ca have been reading academic research which traces the lack of affordable rental housing back to the precipitous decline in federal funding which began in the '80s and accelerated in the early '90s.

Before Andrew Saxton was elected as our MP he promised, in a public meeting in Lynn Valley, that he would work for change on this issue. If he's been doing that in the back rooms of Ottawa, the results are virtually invisible. Federal funding remains inadequate.

It's hard for those of us who are comfortably and affordably housed to believe how many fully employed people are only one pay cheque away from homelessness, yet the 2014 report from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation acknowledged about 20 per cent of Canadians cannot afford market housing. That's roughly six million Canadians, but in the previous eight years, the report says the federal government had helped 915,000 of them.

At that rate it will be over 60 years before the problem is solved, and by that time there will be millions more homeless or at risk of homelessness. As a result the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association has begun a petition called Housing For All. Housers.ca has its own petition. But housing, which is a determinant of health, has not emerged as an election issue yet.

Municipalities do not have sufficient resources to solve this urgent problem by themselves. Federal funding is essential. Thank you for shining a light into the darkness of our housing crisis.

D.J. Stewart

North Vancouver

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