

Bill 170, Keeping People Housed Act, 2024

Letter to the Deputy Leader, Green Party of Ontario

March 20, 2024

Ms. Aislinn Clancy, M.P.P. for Kitchener Centre

Deputy Leader, Green Party of Ontario

Room 449/450

Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park

Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

Dear Ms. Clancy,

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR), Canada's leading registered charitable organization working to advance the right to adequate housing. For 35 years, we have worked tirelessly at the intersection of human rights and housing, providing free services to renters facing evictions and human rights violations to remain housed, providing education and training about housing rights across Canada, and advancing rights-based housing policy through research, policy advocacy, and law reform.

As you know, the lack of secure, affordable rental housing and rising rental costs are key issues in Ontario. Average asking rents in the province are the second highest in the country at [\\$2,431 per month](#) and the rental vacancy rate remains very low at [1.7 per cent](#). While increases in overall rents have somewhat stabilized at [one per cent](#) over the past year, rents continue to increase dramatically for units experiencing renter turnover, with "turnover" rents in [Toronto and Ottawa](#) increasing by 31 per cent and 21 per cent respectively over the past year. At the same time, neither city has any housing available that is affordable for the lowest income households.

In the absence of vacancy control in Ontario, landlords are incentivized to evict renters in order to charge much higher rents. These evictions are increasingly occurring through bad faith "renovictions," which undermines renter rights and security while also leading to the loss of affordable housing stock. In addition to these bad faith evictions, many landlords are allowed to impose above guideline rent increases (AGIs), leading to significantly higher rent. Meanwhile, renters living in newer housing units are not subject to any rent regulations, leaving them vulnerable to rent gouging, where landlords charge rents far higher than what is necessary to cover their expenses and make a reasonable profit.

As a result, more and more Ontario renters are facing bad faith and economic evictions and are at increased risk of homelessness, especially lower income and other marginalized households. The housing affordability crisis in Ontario requires urgent solutions. While building more housing supply is essential, new housing is not going to be built today, and in the absence of robust affordability requirements, it will not be affordable to most Ontarians.

Rent regulations ensure fairness and security for all renters, in addition to protecting our existing stock of affordable housing. We strongly support your Private Member's Bill 170, Keeping People Housed Act, 2024, which would significantly expand protections for and uphold the rights of Ontario renters, while helping to preserve housing affordability. We are pleased to see several important measures in the bill, including:

- **Elimination of vacancy decontrol**, which would ensure that rents are fair for new renters and help preserve the existing stock of low-end of market affordable housing.
- **Expanded rent control for newer housing units**, which would ensure that rents are fair for all existing renters, while reducing opportunities for rent gouging.
- **Greater supports for renters facing renoevictions**, which would reduce bad faith evictions and put greater onus on landlords to ensure renters have access to housing or adequate compensation if they are required to vacate their unit for renovations or repairs.
- **Stronger rental replacement and demolition measures**, which would help to preserve affordability and ensure displaced renters are adequately supported.
- **Creation of a Rent Registry**, which would provide critical information, transparency, and accountability mechanisms to ensure renters are being charged fair rents.
- **Creation of a Rental Task Force**, which would investigate the socioeconomic impacts of AGIs and alternative approaches.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to help inform Bill 170 and to further lend our support. We welcome ongoing opportunities to provide our housing expertise and look forward to further discussions to ensure Ontarians can live in secure and affordable homes.

Sincerely,



Dale Whitmore

Director of Policy and Law Reform
Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR)