



# ACORN Canada

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March 5, 2024

Dear Community and Health Services Committee,

Please accept Waterloo Region ACORN's official submission in regards to regional staff's Affordable Housing Policy and Program Incentives report.

*ACORN Canada is 177,000 members strong across the country. We are comprised of low to moderate income families working on issues of social and economic justice. Like any union or association, our membership decides the drives of the organization, while determining that the vast majority of our resources go towards organizing door to door, block to block, and city to city. We've been organizing in Canada for nearly 20 years and consistently the number one issue that comes up when we speak with residents at their door is housing.*

We commend the Region for taking the time to review different options to preserve affordable housing and protect tenants from displacement. Right now, Ontario is losing affordable housing too fast. The Province's current focus is to build new rental supply, however, this new supply is largely going to luxury, expensive housing with no rent control on new developments. There is very little attention being paid to protect existing affordable housing, which is the most at risk. Renovictions are becoming all too common, as it is an easy way for landlords to increase their profits with little to no repercussions. With these predatory landlord tactics becoming more and more common, low-income tenants are left with nowhere to turn.

Policies like renoviction bylaws, landlord licensing, and rental housing acquisitions funds are vital for preserving the affordable housing we already have and creating the affordable housing Waterloo Region urgently needs. Waterloo Region ACORN is currently working with tenants in several buildings across the region that are experiencing no-fault evictions. Tenants are terrified - they don't know where they will move, they are scared they won't be able to find an affordable place, and they are being left behind. The compensation landlords must provide tenants for renovicting or demovicting a building is not enough to cover the first and last months' rent at current market prices, let alone the years of higher rent the tenant will be paying in the future.

Waterloo Region ACORN members are calling on the committee to support the Homes for All motion. The combination of renoviction bylaws, rental replacement bylaws, and acquisition fund policies would protect low-income tenants, ensuring they are able to continue having a place to live that they can actually afford and maintain their current quality of life, and would preserve existing affordable housing in the private market - facilitating the transition of private market rentals into long-term affordable housing through acquisition.

We need bold, clear action from council to take action on the housing crisis and put a stop to the predatory landlord practices that unhouse our community members every single day.

Sincerely,

Waterloo Region ACORN

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