



Hon. Gordon Wyant, Q.C.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Room 355, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Dr.
Regina, SK
S4S 0B3

November 27, 2020

RE: Rental Housing in COVID-19

Dear Minister Wyant,

On behalf of the member-businesses of the Saskatchewan Landlord Association (SKLA), the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association (SRHBA), the Regina & Region Home Builders' Association (RRHBA) and the Saskatchewan REALTORS® Association (SRA), thank you for your Government's support of the business community in Saskatchewan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The targeted measures that you have put in place over the past few weeks are what is needed to protect the health and safety of our communities and the wellbeing of our economy.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, landlords from across the province have been supporting their tenants with clean and safe housing at a time when we need it most, all while facing declining revenues because of the previous suspension of evictions that took place from March 26 – August 4, 2020. Lifting this suspension demonstrated your Government's support of small and medium sized businesses who provide homes for tens of thousands of Saskatchewan families.

As your Government continues to evaluate targeted restrictions to keep our province safe, you have our collective commitment that we will work hard to protect the public, our employees, and clients. Housing is a particularly important sector during this pandemic and that is not something we take for granted.

Reinstating the suspension of evictions would be catastrophic for the rental housing sector and severely inhibit our ability to provide clean and safe housing for the people of this province.

Suspending evictions allows tenants to miss rent payments without consequences, thus eliminating a landlord's only source of revenue. Without this revenue, a landlord may be forced to file for bankruptcy or sell their property, which could jeopardize housing for tenants in the short and medium term.

Protecting the health and safety of tenants and maintaining the integrity of our sector could be accomplished by granting the Office of Residential Tenancies additional discretion when adjudicating applications for possession by landlords. A hearing officer would then be able to weigh the evidence of both parties to determine if an eviction is just and equitable.

Our Associations are committed to working with you and the Office of Residential Tenancies to ensure all landlords and tenants are treated equitably and that housing remains safe, clean, and sustainable for the people of Saskatchewan. We also remain at your disposal to support your Government's strong leadership as you navigate these uncharted waters.

We look forward to hearing from you and are available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



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CC:

Hon. Lori Carr, Minister of Social Services