

The Investment Properties Owners Association of Nova Scotia

For Immediate Release

July 27, 2021

FIVE IDEAS TO IMPROVE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND LONG-TERM TENANCY

Regardless of who wins the next election, Nova Scotia rental property owners are hoping for positive action to improve the availability of affordable housing for Nova Scotians.

Kevin Russell, the executive director of the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia (IPOANS), says a study commissioned by the organization earlier this year showed that more than 30,000 households in Nova Scotia had a chronic housing need. The report, entitled *Rental Housing Affordability in Nova Scotia*, was prepared by the economics research firm Gardner Pinfold Consulting.

“Everyone has a role to play to improve the availability of affordable housing for more Nova Scotians,” said Russell. “Our members, who have tremendous expertise in the delivery of housing, remain committed to working with other partners in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors to make a lasting positive difference for tenants and their families.”

Among the ideas IPOANS would like to see to improve housing affordability and long-term tenancy in Nova Scotia are:

- Maintaining fixed term leases for rental units to ensure units continue to be available for new Canadians, students, first-time renters and individuals with poor credit history;
- Creating a compliance and enforcement unit in Nova Scotia, based on a model established in British Columbia two years ago, as part of other measures to ensure compliance with the *Residential Tenancies Act* by either landlords or tenants;
- Developing an independent Tenant Rights Office (TRO), funded by the provincial government to help build trust and understanding of the Residential Tenancies Act among tenants through outreach, education, and advocacy on behalf of tenants;
- Conducting a feasibility study on establishing an Emergency Rent Fund, a government sponsored initiative for tenants to access for missed rent payments or the unpaid portion of rent, directly payable to landlords; and
- Eliminating the province’s Capped Assessment Program (CAP) or extending it to include rental properties, so it stops driving up rents for tenants.

Russell noted that there is no independent evidence supporting permanent rent control. The Gardner Pinfold report noted that over the last 20 years, rents have increased at a higher rate in Canadian jurisdictions with rent control compared to Nova Scotia. More than 90 per cent of the province’s over 6,000 landlords are small operators, compared with less than 10 per cent that are large companies.

“We remain committed to working with everyone and anyone to improve housing affordability,” added Russell.

IPOANS has sent a survey asking Nova Scotia’s major party leaders for their position on key questions from the organization. The results of the all-party survey will be released for IPOANS members later in the election campaign. The Gardner Pinfold report is available at www.ipoans.ca.

For more information:

C: Kevin Russell

T: (902) 789-0946

E: kevin@ipoans.ca