



Dear Premier Horgan and Minister Robinson,

We write to you while in the midst of serious deliberations for our Rental Task Force report, which we expect we will be able to share with you later this fall. Interest in our work is high, and the need for reform to make our rental system fairer is becoming clearer all the time.

While we are still working to complete our full report, the Task Force has agreed on a recommendation for a change to the Annual Allowable Rent Increase formula. We decided to share this recommendation now, to give the government the opportunity to act this year, as the need is great.

After considerable deliberation the Rental Housing Task Force is recommending that the B.C. government change the rent increase formula from the current formula of inflation plus a guaranteed 2% (4.5% total for 2019) to inflation only (2.5% for 2019), removing the automatic additional 2% yearly increase.

This decision was made after we heard of many cases where renters struggled to pay yearly maximum rent increases.

We also heard from tenants who have faced maximum rent increases, while building maintenance was not done. In order to ensure building maintenance is prioritized, we are also recommending that changes be made to allow additional rent increases above inflation through application to the Residential Tenancy Branch. This will allow for additional modest rent increases in cases where renovations and repairs to rental units have been completed. This change would bring us into line with the similar practices that have been used in Ontario and Manitoba for over a decade and will ensure landlords can complete necessary work to maintain their buildings, while continuing to provide necessary housing. We suggest that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing work with landlord and tenant groups to determine criteria for above the guideline rent increases.

Taken together these two changes will make rent more affordable for British Columbians, while also helping ensure needed repairs are completed to maintain and improve rental housing in British Columbia.

We look forward to sharing our full report and list of recommendations in November. We thank you for the opportunity to do this work.

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