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REGION OF PEEL
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Re: Broadening Advocacy Priorities to Improve Housing Affordability in Peel

Dear Region of Peel Council and Chair,

As a community member of Peel, local advocate, and community organizational contributor, as well as the National Organizer for the Canadian Alliance to End homelessness, I am writing to provide support for the endorsement by Council for the Report *Broadening Advocacy Priorities to Improve Housing Affordability in Peel*.

Understanding that municipalities will continue to be, and are the jurisdiction that oversees affordable housing, and homelessness systems of care – it is imperative that affordable housing advocacy not only focus on increased funding to support local Regional housing systems and supports, but also address affordability from a market perspective whereas the failure of the private market to provide affordable, accessible and appropriate housing to a growing number of households in Peel must be addressed in tandem.

As outlined in this report, vulnerable community members have been most affected by the impact of the pandemic and now the costs of inflation. Those in deep core housing need is growing, and we are seeing increases of first-time homelessness throughout Canada as a result. Because of the lack of legislative mechanisms on the financialization of housing, and the growing asset class utilizing property as a golden commodity there is no longer viable affordable housing options in the community we live in, and it is disproportionately equity deserving groups who are most affected by the lack of affordable market housing.

Also addressed in the report is the need for an all-encompassing coordination of all levels of government to address some of the private market influences on housing affordability in Peel. The recommendations made here are those similarity echoed in other municipal jurisdictions through their findings and advocacy efforts – ensuring housing is not just an asset but a place to call home, intentional efforts to increase supply of real, deeply affordable housing for those in most need (to avoid homelessness) and those who have low incomes in planning of complete communities is essential – and ensuring that the supply of these affordable units remain so. A supply response to the affordability crisis must prioritize those in deep core housing need now and in the future.

Finally, also addressed as a recommendation, The Region of Peel should also focus advocacy on improving social programs and financial assistance for low- and middle-income community members. Taking a wholistic approach to quality of life means that expanding health care supports, increasing social assistance rates,

enhancing pension benefits, doubling down on an affordable housing benefit, and providing people with a living wage are some significant and appropriate measures needed to be considered by our federal and provincial governments.

Advocacy for funding fairness and proportional equity in Peel has been historical and ongoing. It is time that the Region and Council take the much needed steps, similarly to other municipalities and increase advocacy efforts that will address the affordability crisis from a market perspective.

Sincerely,

Michelle Bilek
Co-Chair, Peel Alliance to End Homelessness
National Organizer, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness