

## **Resolution 6A**

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING (PASSED)**

⇒ District of Lunenburg

**WHEREAS** the basis of an existing Statement of Provincial Interest is to provide housing opportunities to meet the needs of all Nova Scotians, and that adequate shelter is a fundamental requirement for all Nova Scotians; and

**WHEREAS** it is identified in the Provincial Statement on Housing that all provincial government departments must carry out their activities in a way that is reasonably consistent with these statements; and

**WHEREAS** the Province of Nova Scotia should be commended on the formation of Housing Nova Scotia, with its mandate to develop partnerships among the private sector, non-profit sector and municipal governments; and

**WHEREAS** the provincial government should be further commended for including safe and affordable rental housing as an area of concern in its recently released Housing Strategy document; and

**WHEREAS** renters in all communities throughout Nova Scotia continue to face challenges - such as structural repair; system failures; mold; and other associated problems - compromising the fitness of their shelter; and

**WHEREAS** few municipalities in Nova Scotia have identified the fiscal capacity to undertake the development of related regulations under the *Municipal Government Act* and that such an inconsistency in application across local jurisdictions cannot serve such a fundamental societal concern; and

**WHEREAS** the Province has existing authority under the Residential Tenancies Act to concern itself with ensuring that all shelters in Nova Scotia are fit for habitation; and

**WHEREAS** the mandate of Housing Nova Scotia, as identified in the new Provincial Housing Strategy, includes "engagement, innovation, investment partnership, and accountability" as a means to improve housing conditions;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the UNSM work with Housing Nova Scotia to establish minimum provincial standards for all rental housing stock, and to expand the role and resources of those agencies enforcing the *Residential Tenancies Act*, so as to effectively maintain standards in all communities, for all residents, across the Province.

Response from:  
*Department of Community Services, Department Labour and Advanced  
Education and Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations (Residential  
Tenancies)*

**RESPONSES:**

***(Response from Department of Community Services)***

*As set out in the Province's Housing Strategy, the Province believes the real success in implementing the strategy involves building partnerships with Nova Scotia's municipalities, businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals. We recognize the need for improving the Province's existing rental housing stock that is in need of repair and we are prepared to work with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to take positive steps to address the issue.*

*The Department of Community Services does not have the legislative authority to assume responsibility for the enforcement of the Provincial Building Code and the Residential Tenancies Act nor are we seeking to take on these responsibilities.*

*Housing Nova Scotia offers housing programs that provide financial assistance to help landlords who rent to low income households to upgrade their rental units. Recent data released from the 2011 National Housing Survey indicate that 29% of Nova Scotian households are renters, and 10.5% of the rental units are in need of major repairs. Housing Nova Scotia is interested in exploring how we can improve the situation by working with the UNSM.*

***(Response from Department of Labour and Advanced Education)***

*Labour and Advanced Education as a provincial partner, with responsibility for the provincial building and fire codes under the Office of the Fire Marshall, supports the Provincial Statement on Housing and the associated Provincial Strategy on Housing through the adoption of minimum standards for the construction, renovation, and alteration of housing in the Province under the Building Code Act, and a system of inspection for housing under the Fire Safety Act may be carried out by municipalities.*

***(Response from Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations (Residential Tenancies)***

*The purpose of the Residential Tenancies Act is to provide landlords and tenants with an efficient and cost-effective means for settling disputes. While the Act does provide tenants with an avenue that may lead to landlords being required to address standards of health, safety and housing as a lease obligation, it was never intended to establish the standards for consideration*

*or provide authority to take remedial steps. This is left to the Building Code and Municipal bylaws.*