

February 16, 2024

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Cariboo Regional District
Central Coast Regional District
Columbia Shuswap Regional District
Comox Valley Regional District
Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine
Metro Vancouver Regional District
Mount Waddington Regional District
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
qathet Regional District

RE: Joint Letter re: Secondary Suite Incentive Program

Dear Regional Districts Boards,

In September 2023, the B.C. government announced that beginning in April 2024, the Province, through BC Housing, will introduce a pilot program, the Secondary Suite Incentive Program (SSIP), as part of its plan to create more affordable housing in the province.

While the initial announcement stated that properties eligible for the SSIP must be located in one of the 161 incorporated municipalities, in January 2024, 16 regional districts were included as part of the April 2024 launch of the SSIP. This leaves 11 regional districts out of the SSIP for the foreseeable future.

At its meeting held February 9, 2024, the Board of the NCRD resolved to send a letter to the Minister of Housing regarding expanding the SSIP to include all regional districts and that, if possible, this letter be a joint letter from all remaining regional districts currently not a part of the SSIP launch in April 2024.

The NCRD has attached a proposed letter to the Minister of Housing for your information. Should your government resolve to be a signatory to this letter, please inform Howard Tsang, Corporate Officer, at corporateofficer@ncrdbc.com, before Friday, March 22, 2024.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the NCRD.

Sincerely,



Barry Pages

Chair



14, 342 3rd Avenue West
Prince Rupert BC, V8J 1L5



P: 250.624.2002
TF: 888.301.2002



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March 22, 2024

The Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing
PO Box 9844 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9T2
Email: HOUS.minister@gov.bc.ca

RE: Including All Electoral Areas in Secondary Suite Incentive Program

Dear Minister Kahlon,

In September 2023, the B.C. government announced that beginning in April 2024, the Province, through BC Housing, will introduce a pilot program, the Secondary Suite Incentive Program (SSIP), as part of its plan to create more affordable housing in the province.

On December 7, 2023, the Board of the NCRD sent you a letter advocating for the inclusion of all electoral areas in the SSIP. The Board received your response dated January 30, 2024, noting the expansion of the SSIP to include 16 regional districts as part of the April 2024 launch of the program. It was stated that these Regional Districts have the necessary building bylaws and building-permit and inspection services across their electoral areas that make them eligible for the SSIP pilot. Can you confirm that all eligible municipalities for the SSIP have the requisite building permitting and inspection services required to undertake this service?

The letter also stated that program adaptations to enable expansion to properties in the remaining regional districts will be explored for future years. Until then, many electoral areas across the province continue to be ineligible for this program. Communities within these electoral areas, many of them in remote parts of the province, are also experiencing severe housing challenges. In fact, the costs to build new housing and to renovate existing housing in more remote areas are typically much higher due to increased transportation and labour costs. The SSIP will be impactful to help develop new housing options in regional districts not covered by the SSIP, as the \$40,000 rebate will account for a greater portion of a home's assessed value, compared to larger centres.

The electoral areas not covered by the SSIP are experiencing severe immediate housing supply needs to house essential workers, including first responders, health care workers, critical infrastructure workers, and teachers. Many remote communities are unable to recruit for these critical positions due to a lack of housing available in their communities; this includes a lack of affordable rental options and a lack of affordable real estate supply. This is contributing to key services being unavailable to residents who live in these communities.

We strongly urge your government to consider expanding this program to include all electoral areas in the province, thereby reducing inequities and barriers to participation.



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We look forward to your response on this matter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the NCRD.

ADD SIGNATORIES

Cc: BC Housing

DRAFT



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VIA EMAIL

Ref. 63655

January 30, 2024

Barry Pages
Chair
North Coast Regional District
14-342 3rd Avenue West
Prince Rupert, BC V8J 1L5
Email: corporateofficer@ncrdbc.com

Dear Chair Pages:

Thank you for your December 7, 2023 letter, regarding the Secondary Suite Incentive Program (SSIP).

We appreciate your interest in this innovative new program. The Province recognizes that one of the biggest challenges for people in BC is finding an affordable home to live in. To address this need, the Province has developed an action plan to meet those challenges and to deliver more homes for people, faster. The Homes for People action plan will speed up delivery of new homes, increase the supply of middle-income housing, fight speculation, and help those who need it the most, and the SSIP program is just one of multiple initiatives coming out of the plan. Complete information on the action plan is available here: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Homes For People.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Homes_For_People.pdf)

SSIP is a three-year pilot program, which we expect to expand over time. This program supports the creation of new, affordable rental housing while ensuring the units are safe for tenants and owners living in those homes. SSIP currently requires participating homeowners to provide building and occupancy permits issued by the local authority to verify that publicly-funded units are legal and meet building safety standards.

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**Office of the
Minister of Housing**

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Based on recent discussions with individuals and local representatives in unincorporated areas, we have expanded eligibility to include 16 regional districts for the April 2024 launch. These are regional districts with building bylaws that provide building permits and inspections to all parts of the electoral areas within their boundaries.

Program adaptations to enable expansion to properties in the remaining regional districts will be explored for future years. This will include exploring alternatives for electoral areas like those in the North Coast Regional District, where local government building permit and inspection services are not available.

Information about the program is available on the BC Housing website here:
<https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/secondary-suite>

Additionally, a list of eligible municipalities is available here:
<https://www.bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/SSIP-Municipality-List-and-RALS-Areas.pdf>

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ravi Kahlon', written in a cursive style.

Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing

pc: Jennifer Rice, MLA



December 7, 2023

The Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing
PO Box 9844 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9T2
Email: HOUS.minister@gov.bc.ca

RE: Including Electoral Areas in Secondary Suite Incentive Program

Dear Minister Kahlon,

The North Coast Regional District (NCRD) is uniquely situated on B.C.'s north coast and is home to the communities in and around Haida Gwaii and Prince Rupert.

In September 2023, the B.C. government announced that beginning in April 2024, the Province, through BC Housing, will introduce a pilot program, the Secondary Suite Incentive Program (SSIP), as part of its plan to create more affordable housing in the province.

While this program is welcomed news, it has come to the NCRD's attention that properties must be located within one of the 161 incorporated municipalities in British Columbia in order to be eligible for the SSIP. As a result, homeowners in the NCRD's electoral areas are not eligible for this program.

The NCRD's electoral areas include the Haida Gwaii communities of Sandspit, Tlell, and Tow Hill, which are all experiencing severe housing shortages. Being a top vacation destination in B.C., short term rentals have decimated the long-term rental market. Further, the cost to build new housing on Haida Gwaii is much higher than most areas in B.C., due to its rural and remote location on B.C.'s north coast.

The SSIP will be a helpful incentive for existing homeowners to create new rental units to help supply housing for essential workers, including first responders, health care workers, critical infrastructure workers, and teachers. We strongly urge your government to consider expanding this program to include the electoral areas in the province, thereby reducing inequities and barriers to participation.

We look forward to your response on this matter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the NCRD.



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Best regards,

Barry Pages
Chair

*Cc: Jennifer Rice, North Coast MLA
BC Housing*



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