

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

FROM: COUNCILLOR TETRAULT

SUBJECT: DECLARING HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT

PURPOSE: To submit a resolution to UBCM to call for the BC Government to enshrine housing as a human right.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the City of Burnaby submit the following resolution by June 15, 2025, for UBCM consideration:

“THAT the UBCM call for the BC Government to enshrine housing as a human right in legislation and forthcoming housing and homelessness strategies, ensuring that housing policy in British Columbia is grounded in principles of equity, accessibility, accountability, and the inherent dignity of all people.”

BACKGROUND

The motion proposes that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) urge the BC Government to enshrine housing as a human right in both legislation and forthcoming strategies addressing housing and homelessness. This initiative is intended to ensure that housing policies in British Columbia are rooted in the fundamental principles of equity, accessibility, accountability, and the inherent dignity of all individuals. The motion reflects a growing recognition that housing is not merely a commodity but a necessary element for achieving human well-being and social justice.

The notion that housing is a human right is recognized globally, particularly within the framework of international human rights law. Enshrining housing as a human right in BC legislation would serve as a concrete step toward realizing international obligations at the provincial level, addressing systemic challenges such as affordability, homelessness, and housing inequality.

Over the last decade, British Columbia has faced a severe housing crisis characterized by skyrocketing housing prices, a lack of affordable rental options, and rising rates of homelessness. The cities in the Lower Mainland as well as other urban centers throughout the province, has witnessed significant housing inequities. Many

marginalized groups, including low-income individuals, Indigenous communities, and persons with disabilities, face disproportionate barriers to accessing adequate housing. The crisis has been exacerbated by insufficient housing supply, speculative practices in the real estate market, and an inadequate framework for tenant protections.

CONCLUSION

This motion represents a pivotal opportunity for British Columbia to lead by example in addressing its housing crisis. By enshrining housing as a human right, the province would align itself with international standards, address systemic inequities, and reaffirm its commitment to the dignity and well-being of all residents.

If Council adopts the resolution, it will be submitted to the UBCM by June 15, 2025, for consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

COUNCILLOR TETRAULT