



Landlord's Self-Help Centre

A community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario

15th Floor – 55 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2H7

Delivered by email to
residential.tenancies@ontario.ca

June 30, 2016

Residential and Commercial Tenancies Unit
Housing Policy Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 14th Floor
Toronto Ontario
M5G 2E5

Re: Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update - Small Landlord Consultation

The Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update and the Small Landlord Consultation recognize and validate the important contribution to housing made by the small landlord community.

The private rental accommodation provided by these homeowners is vital to Ontario's rental housing stock as it fills the gap created by the lack of affordable housing built and operated by the government. The rental accommodation provided by small landlords typically represents the secondary rental market which includes houses, duplexes, triplexes, apartments over stores and rental units in owner occupied houses such as single rooms, flats and second suites. Typically, landlords renting this type of accommodation are leveraging their property to generate revenue needed to supplement the cost of homeownership. These owners are not professional landlords and often struggle to manage the cost of legal services should a dispute arise with their tenant.

Landlord's Self-Help Centre (LSHC), a speciality community legal clinic, has worked extensively with the small landlord community to provide, among other activities, summary legal advice and educational programs respecting their rights and responsibilities as housing providers.

LSHC makes great efforts to educate current and potential landlords about their rights and responsibilities. By way of contrast, there has been no visible signposting on the part of the Ontario Government to alert these small landlords of the potential for legal, and/or financial consequences they may face when deciding to rent out their property.

The issues raised in the Small Landlord Consultation Document clearly illustrate the legitimate challenges and problems most people would prefer to be warned about, rather than have to experience first-hand. Such issues act as undeniable obstacles and weigh heavily on the decision to continue in the role as housing provider.

Recently Justice Alphonse Lacavera acknowledged, prior to sentencing the notorious Nina Willis, that the current legislation was designed to protect both renters and property owners. He went on to say "There was a time, I think, in our society when landlords abused tenants". The system "may have swung in favour of the tenant for a time," he said. "There must be a levelling of the playing field between landlords and tenants and the system, which is there for the benefit of each, should not be abused."

Landlord's Self-Help Centre (LSHC) has prepared the attached submission and is pleased to participate in the consultation process which allows us to highlight the challenges and concerns our small landlord client community routinely face. We trust that the information provided in our submission will be reflected in the amendments to the legislation.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Wankiewicz".

Susan Wankiewicz
Clinic Director

Attachment

cc: Sonya Rolfe
Manager, Residential & Commercial Tenancies
Housing Policy Branch, Ministry of Housing