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**RE: Every Nova Scotia needs a place to Call Home**

It is time the communities of Nova Scotia were invited to participate in bringing about affordable housing for Nova Scotia families by our government.

The Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia and its members are concerned about the impact of the NS Government's recent announcement of a freeze on an already under resourced community services delivery system. Arguably, the weakest system in Canada. Such freezes are indeed cuts to needed social spending at a time when the Government of NS has laid out a new anti poverty strategy which highlights housing affordability. Federal dollars for housing have recently announced yet the provincial share of such an initiative is unclear. These actions must leave citizens wondering if the government takes poverty reduction seriously. It is essential to understand how poverty corrodes the fabric of all communities and everyone pays with dollars and spiritual pain. Perhaps we should set our aims higher and eliminate housing poverty.

Now we are nearing the end of our provincial election process and housing is hardly an item of interest. All sectors of our population rural and urban are being affected by the high cost of shelter, high energy costs and poor state of housing.

AHANS understands well how housing affordability is a key element in removing poverty conditions. The availability of affordable and appropriate housing effectively acts to reduce poverty. The Province's current strategy includes increased housing affordability but how will they do that?

We believe that Nova Scotia needs its own ministry of housing with its own minister. We need a secretariat of housing that can monitor housing gaps and needs and can work with all sectors to provide affordable, safe, and appropriate housing in rural, suburban and urban areas. We are keen to work with any newly elected government in building a successful strategy for affordable housing and we expect them to act in an open and transparent fashion to arrive at a successful outcome. Working together can produce greater results. We welcome participation from all sectors of Nova Scotian society. For those who want to be involved or need further information go to our web site at [www.ahans.ca](http://www.ahans.ca).

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