



News Release

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PROVINCE HAS LITTLE DATA ON CONDITION OF SOCIAL HOUSING: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The government collects too little information on how well Ontario's \$40-billion stock of social housing is being maintained and on whether there is an adequate supply to meet local needs, Auditor General Jim McCarter said in his *2009 Annual Report*, released today.

"We identified a number of issues that we believe the province should be better informed about," McCarter said. "This is especially critical given long waiting lists for social housing and the province's recent commitment to provide municipalities with more than \$600 million for new and existing housing programs."

At the end of 2008, there were about 260,000 units of social housing in Ontario, consisting of 100,000 public-housing units and 160,000 non-profit and co-operative units. Most were built between the mid-1960s and the mid-1990s through a combination of federal, provincial and joint federal-provincial programs. Community groups also built social housing during the 1980s and 1990s.

Social housing is funded by various levels of government, but the responsibility for delivering social housing, including administering the waiting lists and looking after the physical properties, was delegated by law to municipalities in 2000. Nevertheless, it remains in the province's long-term interests to monitor how well the Ontario's social-housing stock is being managed and maintained.

Among the findings in the Auditor's Report:

- The deteriorating condition of the social-housing stock has municipalities worried. For instance, in 2006, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation formally assessed the condition of its 60,000 units and identified immediate capital-repair needs of \$300 million. However, the government had no up-to-date and reliable information on how this estimate was determined or the magnitude of this issue province wide.
- The number of households on waiting lists for social housing across the province stood at about 137,000 at the end of 2008. In many cities, the average wait time was more than five years—and one municipality reported a wait time of 21 years for all categories except seniors.
- A large number of federal funding agreements with housing providers will start to expire in 2015, with no guarantee of renewal. Municipalities will still be required by law to maintain the prescribed minimum number of housing units, even though the discontinued federal funding would leave many existing projects financially not viable. The government had no firm plans to address this issue.

-30-

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