



## March 16, 2023

To: The Honorable Lorne Kusugak - Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Eiryn Devereaux, President/CEO Nunavut Housing Corporation
From: Jason Rochon, President - Nunavut Employees Union, and
Lorraine Rousseau Regional Executive Vice-President, North, Public Service Alliance of Canada
RE: Iqaluit Housing Association and the Nunavut Housing Corporation Mandate

On the <u>Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC)</u> website the following statement from the Honorable Lorne Kusugak greets all visitors "The vision of housing in Nunavut is one of families and individuals having fair access to a range of affordable housing options. Making this vision a reality has been, and will continue to be a remarkable challenge. But that challenge is not insurmountable."

The heart of any goal or vision rests not with politicians or bureaucrats but with the workers tasked with the execution and provision of the services and support that make such goals "*surmountable*".

On Monday March 13, 2023 the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and the Nunavut Employees Union (NEU) served the Iqaluit Housing Authority (IHA) with a notice of strike action. This was done after exhausting all attempts to reach a fair agreement on behalf of the unionized workers of the IHA and was not done lightly. On Wednesday March 15, the employer served the PSAC with lock-out notice - clearly signalling their continued unwillingness to try to reach a fair agreement. This leaves PSAC/NEU Members who work at the IHA no options but to move forward with strike action.

These PSAC/NEU Members are the dedicated individuals who provide Iqaluit with invaluable daily housing services and support. The employer has insisted that its mandate does not allow for fair economic increases and since the beginning of talks have stuck to offering wage increases well below the cost of living that fail to meet the current inflationary reality.

Employees at the IHA have been leaving that employer for better paying jobs in Iqaluit, leaving the IHA in disarray and placing unhealthy pressure on remaining staff. This trend, if left unaddressed, will also place the IHA in a *"insurmountable"* position where it will not be able to 'do-the-job'.

This is not just an Iqaluit issue. Local Housing Organizations (LHOs) throughout Nunavut are in the same dire situation.

That is why the PSAC and NEU are calling on the NHC to not only step in and help resolve the current impasse in Iqaluit but to take a long-range view of its mandate to ensure that all LHOs provide fair economic compensation. Doing this will encourage staff recruitment and retention, allowing LHOs across Nunavut to reliably provide much-needed services to their communities.

The NHC clearly needs to amend and update its mandate, so that LHOs in Nunavut can operate in a fiscally responsible manner while ensuring fair compensation and working conditions for employees. This is the only way that LHOs will be able to provide Nunavut with the much-needed *"access to a range of affordable housing options."* 

We ask you to step-up and meet the challenge of providing housing options and solutions head-on in a way that works for Nunavut and for LHO employees.

Jason Rochon, President NEU

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Lorraine Rousseau, PSAC REVP North

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