



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

July 8, 2024

Reference: 67894

Kevin Flynn
Board Chair
Columbia Shuswap Regional District
555 Harbourfront Drive North East
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Salmon Arm BC V1E 4P1
Email: JFreund@csrd.bc.ca; kflynn@csrd.bc.ca

Dear Chair Flynn:

Thank you for your letter of April 19, 2024, regarding the Secondary Suite Incentive Program (SSIP). We appreciate your interest in this innovative new program as an opportunity to address critical housing issues in the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). I apologize for the delay in responding.

The Province recognizes that one of the biggest challenges for people in BC is finding an affordable home to live in. To address this need, the Province released the *Homes for People* action plan to speed up the delivery of new homes, increase the supply of middle-income housing, fight speculation, and help those who need it the most. SSIP is one of the initiatives coming out of the plan. Complete information on the action plan is available here: news.gov.bc.ca/files/Homes_For_People.pdf

After our initial release of SSIP criteria, we responded to interest from regional districts by expanding eligibility where possible within the existing program structure. BC Housing relies on existing local government building permit and inspection services to ensure that the homes built are legal and safe for tenants and owners living in those homes.

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As part of the application process, homeowners are required to submit a building permit from their local government. Regional districts with differential access to building permit and inspection services could not be accommodated without additional costs and implementation delays. As well, since SSIP encouraged homeowners to begin projects prior to the program launch, there was a risk that homeowners could have taken on thousands of dollars in construction costs only later to be found ineligible for the program. Based on the risks where local government building services are not available, we chose to launch the program with more restricted eligibility while continuing to do the needed work to inform future program expansion.

Ministry staff have noted that there are a small number of unincorporated municipalities within the CSRD where homeowners cannot obtain building permits or inspections from either local government in their area. These areas include Electoral Area A (Parson, Nicholson, Donald, and Blaeberry, and the Town of Field) and Electoral Area D (Falkland, Deep Creek, Rancho, Salmon Valley, Silver Creek, and Gardom Lake). Unfortunately, these homeowners will not be able to meet the requirements of the program.

We are committed to finding ways to continue to expand access to this program. In the meantime, we are also happy to extend eligibility to any regional district or incorporated municipality that makes changes that enable all homeowners to access required building services for SSIP. Ministry staff have informed me that this could include a bylaw amendment to enable those outside of regional district building service areas to voluntarily opt-in and receive permits and inspections. We understand there are cases where this is not possible, and we continue to explore other options that would support future SSIP expansion.

We recognize the benefit of the program for communities across the province. As a three-year pilot program, SSIP will be closely monitored and evaluated to inform changes and improvements over time.

The most updated information about the program is available on the BC Housing website here: www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/secondary-suite

I trust this information is of assistance. Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ravi Kahlon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing