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April 22, 2024

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk  
Niagara Region  
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way  
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their April 19, 2024 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors passed the following motion regarding NRH 3-2024:

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors does **ENDORSE** the attached letter to the Ombudsman of Ontario regarding delays at the Landlord Tenant Board;
2. That the Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors does direct staff to **FORWARD** the letter to the May 7, 2024 Public Health and Social Services Committee (PHSSC) meeting for information.

Your assistance is requested in moving NRH 3-2024 through proper channels to Public Health and Social Services Committee (PHSSC).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Zalepa', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Gary Zalepa  
Chair



**Niagara Regional Housing**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** April 19, 2024  
**To:** Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) Board of Directors  
**From:** Cameron Banach, Director Housing Services / CEO of NRH  
**Re:** Letter to the Ombudsman of Ontario

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Staff are requesting that the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors endorse the attached letter to the Ombudsman of Ontario regarding delays at the Landlord Tenant Board. Not only are the delays extensive for non-payment of rent, but the impaired safety application for a dangerous situation in a community is also taking extensive times to get resolved; therefore, not addressing the safety concern in a timely manner. This puts staff in a precarious position with members of the community in not being able to address their concerns.

A similar letter was sent in March of 2020 with the same concerns with no apparent action taken to address the situation.

**Please call 905-682-9201 if you need this information in a different format,  
or translated into another language.**

**Niagara Regional Housing**

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COM-C 7-2024

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario  
483 Bay Street, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, South Tower  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

April 19, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with utmost respect that the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors must convey our ongoing concerns with delays in matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board.

As you may appreciate, both private landlords and not-for-profit housing associations operate on the income they receive from their rental properties. Prior to the fall of 2019, applications to terminate tenancies for non-payment of rent were processed and hearings were scheduled within four to five weeks of the date of filing. More recently, we are finding that hearings are sometimes scheduled three or four months after filing. The financial impact on social housing landlords, with the burden to carry tenants who are not paying rent, is creating a significant impact on our day-to-day operations. We can only imagine how this is adversely impacting private landlords who have large mortgages as well as operating expenses.

NRH is in the business of providing affordable housing and such delays are affecting our ability to meet our mandate. On a day-to-day basis we are finding that tenants are learning of the delays which are allowing them to remain in rental units without paying for months on end.

We believe that this situation has been caused by the large number of vacancies that appear in the list of adjudicators who are available to hear cases. These adjudicators are appointed by the province. We are advised that the Landlord and Tenant Board, in particular the Hamilton office which governs our territorial jurisdiction, is understaffed as attrition takes place and no new employees are hired. There are times when we file applications and a hearing date isn't scheduled for an extended period of time due to these staff shortages.

We respectfully ask that the government and the ombudsman take immediate action to remedy this situation to make the system effective and efficient again. Failure to do so will result in social housing providers' inability to provide suitable housing to those truly in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gary Zalepa', written over a horizontal line.

Gary Zalepa  
Board Chair, Niagara Regional Housing

cc: The Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Jim Bradley, Regional Chair, Niagara Regional Council  
Jeff Burch, MPP Niagara Centre  
Wayne Gates, MPP Niagara Falls  
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Niagara West  
Jennie Stevens, MPP St. Catharines

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