



For Immediate Release  
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### **Minister`s Absence from National Housing Meetings `Shameful`**

VANCOUVER – Human Resources and Social Development Minister Monte Solberg’s refusal to attend a national housing meeting with provincial and territorial ministers taking place today is a shameful failure of leadership.

“Minister Solberg is snubbing his provincial counterparts and wasting an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on affordable housing and homelessness,” Liberal Social Development Critic Ruby Dhalla said today.

“Despite the crisis in homelessness and housing in the country, the Minister is leaving the provinces to fend for themselves.”

Provincial and territorial housing ministers are meeting today in Vancouver, but federal housing Minister Monte Solberg has boycotted the summit. This is the first time in almost a decade that the federal government has refused to participate in a national housing meeting.

Dr. Dhalla, who is in Vancouver to show the support of Liberals for this important issue and to meet with stakeholders and non-governmental organizations on housing and homelessness, said it is appalling that the Minister can’t even bring himself to attend the meeting.

“This is a slap in the face to the millions of Canadians who struggle to find affordable housing in an increasingly competitive market. Housing affordability is a leading cause of evictions and homelessness,” she said.

The former Liberal government recognized the importance of this issue, pledging to introduce a new Canadian housing framework following a meeting with provincial and territorial ministers shortly before the 2005-06 federal election. No framework has been released since then, and funding for the three major existing federal housing and homelessness programs –the Affordable Housing Initiative, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and the Residential Rehabilitation and Assistance Program– will expire in fiscal 2008.

“It’s critical that the Conservative government commit to the renewal of these programs and to the development of a national housing framework,” said Dr. Dhalla. “The provinces and territories, and all Canadians, want to see leadership in the fight for affordable housing and against homelessness.”

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