



October 1, 2013

President  
Président

Claude Dauphin  
Maire,  
Arrondissement de Lachine,  
Ville de Montréal, QC

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2

First Vice-President  
Premier vice-président

Brad Woodside  
Mayor,  
City of Fredericton, NB

Dear Prime Minister:

Second Vice-President  
Deuxième vice-président

Raymond Louie  
Councillor,  
City of Vancouver, BC

As you prepare your Speech from the Throne, I would like to share with you the perspective of FCM's 2,000 member municipalities, home to 90 per cent of Canadians. We are grateful for the constructive partnership we have built with your government on many national issues, and we support your commitment to jobs, growth, and Canadians' financial security. For that reason, we believe it is time for us to focus on the high-cost of housing in Canada, the most urgent financial issue facing Canadians.

Third Vice-President  
Troisième vice-président

Clark Somerville  
Councillor,  
Regional Municipality of  
Halton, ON

Your government has rightly taken many steps to manage risks in the housing market. However, one in four Canadians is paying more than they can afford for housing, and mortgage debt held by Canadians now stands at just over \$1.1 trillion. Housing costs and, as the Bank of Canada notes, household debt, are undermining Canadians personal financial security, while putting our national economy at risk.

Past President  
Présidente sortante

Karen Leibovici  
Councillor,  
City of Edmonton, AB

Canadians need a stable and secure housing market that creates and maintains jobs and allows for a range of living options. Cities and communities need better housing options to attract new workers, meet the needs of young families and to support seniors and our most vulnerable citizens. As it stands, for those who cannot afford to purchase a home, the short supply of rental units is driving up rental costs and making it hard to house workers in regions experiencing strong economic activity. And an inadequate supply of subsidized housing for those in need is pushing some of the most vulnerable Canadians on to the street.

Chief Executive Officer  
Chef de la direction

Brock Carlton  
Ottawa, ON

The federal government has a limited but critical role to play, in partnership with other orders of government, in restoring balance to our housing system. Federal actions, aligned with provincial, territorial, and local initiatives, can be a catalyst for a stronger and more balanced housing system, which will attract investment and create jobs, support new growth, and increase labour mobility.

24, rue Clarence Street,  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5P3

T. 613-241-5221  
F. 613-241-7440

[www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca)

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**Working together on public safety**

Working together on housing will build on our recent collaboration and progress on several national issues that impact families and communities. The recent tragic and destructive events such as the train derailment in Lac-Mégantic and flooding in Calgary and southern Alberta, as well as the Greater Toronto Area, have underscored the central role of governments in ensuring public safety and responding to disasters.

FCM has been working closely with Minister Raitt to address rail safety issues and we are encouraged that the Minister shares our view that the local first responders need to know what dangerous goods are going through their communities and need timely information from rail carriers in the event of an emergency. Minister Raitt's leadership has been essential to making meaningful progress and we look forward to working with the Minister and Transport Canada officials to swiftly deliver concrete reforms that will make Canada's railways as safe as possible.

**Working together on infrastructure program design**

Your government's commitment to a new ten-year infrastructure plan in the 2013 Economic Action Plan, including the unprecedented index of the Gas Tax Fund at two per cent per year, was an essential and welcome investment in Canadian cities and communities. These investments will help fix aging roads and fight traffic gridlock, and improve safety and productivity while creating new jobs.

However, as we enter the critical program design phase, the right decisions must be taken to ensure a fair and predictable share of the new Building Canada Fund is allocated to local roads, bridges, water systems and public transit. We are ready to work with your government to produce clear national objectives and mechanisms for reporting back to Canadians, so we can make sure every dollar we invest delivers the very best value for taxpayers.

Canadians are looking for progress on these issues and they need your leadership, combined with collaborative efforts by all orders of government to get there. We believe this will lead to stronger, safer communities and a stronger, more prosperous Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Claude Dauphin'.

Claude Dauphin  
FCM President

CD/CS:sd