

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** Your correspondence to the Honourable Steve Clark - MAH File 21-2212

**From:** Minister (MMAH) <[minister.mah@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mah@ontario.ca)>

**Sent:** July 30, 2021 12:22 PM

**To:** Office of the Mayor <[mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca)>

**Cc:** [donna.skelly@pc.ola.org](mailto:donna.skelly@pc.ola.org)

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234-2021-2212

July 30, 2021

Your Worship  
Mayor Fred Eisenberger  
City of Hamilton  
[mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca)

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding concerns around the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on renters and residential evictions. I appreciate the time you have taken to write.

The health and safety of Ontarians continue to be our government's top priority. This is why, in response to increased COVID-19 cases, we have issued another emergency order to temporarily pause the enforcement of residential eviction orders and writs of possessions, so no one is forced to leave their homes while a stay-at-home-order is in force. The pause took effect on April 8, 2021 and will end when the stay-at-home order is lifted.

To further protect tenants, especially those impacted by COVID-19, we are now requiring the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) to consider, during an eviction hearing, whether the landlord tried to negotiate a repayment agreement with the tenant if the tenant fell behind in rent after March 17, 2020. This must happen before the LTB can issue an eviction order for non-payment of rent. This will help encourage landlords and tenants to work together on a fair repayment agreement and maintain the tenancy – instead of resorting to evictions for rent arrears accumulated during COVID-19.

Our government has announced a range of measures that will help protect residential tenants and provide supports to those most affected by the pandemic. The temporary pause on residential evictions builds on our response to date, including the 2021 rent freeze and providing \$765 million in **Social Services Relief Fund** (SSRF) money to local Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to help address a range of critical short-term needs and create long-term solutions for those most in need, including those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This funding may be used for activities like rent banks and utility banks to prevent people from becoming homeless, securing motel and hotel spaces, and funding additional staff to support physical distancing of shelter residents.

In partnership with the federal government, we also launched the **Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit**. Over 7,900 households have been approved to date for direct rent assistance payments - with more households receiving approvals every day. This is a portable benefit, that tenants can use in any type of housing, anywhere in the province.

We are working to increase housing supply by building the right types of homes in the right places, as we believe everyone deserves a home that meets their needs and budget. In 2020-21 alone, including the SSRF, we allocated \$1.75 billion to sustain, repair and grow community housing and provide supports to

prevent homelessness. As well, we are simplifying the rules to make access fairer and more transparent, and to shorten waitlists.

To address homelessness, we are continuing to invest in homelessness prevention and supportive housing programs, including the **Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative** and **Home For Good**. Our whole-of-government approach involves working across ministries to improve supportive housing programs so people get the help they need, including mental health and addiction supports.

We will also be requiring Service Managers across the province to implement By-Name Lists. A By-Name List is a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness, along with information about their needs, to help Service Managers better understand who is experiencing homelessness in their communities. This will help Service Managers better understand the needs in their communities and help match individuals not just with housing, but with the right housing and supports.

As you know, the LTB is an independent adjudicative tribunal under the purview of Tribunals Ontario and the Ministry of the Attorney General. To preserve the independence of the LTB, I cannot interfere in tribunal processes or decisions. I have taken the liberty of copying my colleague, the Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General, for his review and consideration.

Our government continues to call on landlords and tenants to come together and be reasonable with each other – and we know many landlords and tenants across the province have been doing just that. Tenants who can pay their rent must continue to do so to the best of their abilities.

Our government will continue to work with tenants, landlords, the LTB, and all of our partners to support a safe and gradual recovery of our province.

Once again, thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark  
Minister

- c. The Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General
- The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General
- The Honourable Todd Smith
- Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
- Donna Skelly, MPP Flamborough – Glanbrook