

Good Afternoon. My name is Glenn May-Anderson, and I am the Executive Director of the Prince Edward Hastings affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. We are one of 54 national affiliates, nearly half of which are located here in Ontario.

I want to thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak before the Committee here today.

For those who may not be aware, Habitat for Humanity transforms the lives of families by helping them achieve affordable home ownership. Our mission is to increase the supply of decent and affordable housing in order to achieve our vision of a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live.

We work toward this goal every day, by engaging our local communities, mobilizing countless volunteers, and fundraising through several avenues, including our Habitat for Humanity ReStore operations.

When a family transitions to home ownership in a Habitat home, there are significant impacts to the quality of their lives:

- Our partner families experience better **educational outcomes** for their children, with more of them attending post-secondary institutions, and more of them graduating;
- Habitat partner families experience greater **employment stability**. After families move into their Habitat homes, the quality of their employment, employment stability, and household income all increase on a consistent basis.
- Habitat for Humanity **reduces demand on social housing**: 37% of our partner families vacate social housing in order to move into their Habitat home.

- Over 70% of our partner families donate time and money to charities and causes, becoming **more engaged with their communities**; and
- There is a 60% reduction in **food bank usage** by our partner families after moving into a Habitat home.

Our future success will be determined by the partnerships we build with communities, businesses, other non-profit and social agencies, major corporations, and with government and government-funded agencies at all levels.

I want to thank the Government of Ontario for all the work you have done so far to improve access to affordable housing. Bill 108, the “More Homes, More Choice Act,” contains concrete measures to create the right environment for developers, including non-profits like Habitat for Humanity, to expand affordable housing stock.

We fully support this government’s efforts to reduce the **red tape**, and the tens of thousands of dollars that delays can add to a construction project. And we agree that more can be done.

There remain inconsistencies in municipal planning processes that sometimes see neighbouring municipalities with substantively different planning and design requirements for the same type of housing. This makes it more difficult, and more costly, for us to scale up and build more homes. It would be helpful if there were some consistency to these planning requirements across the province.

We also struggle with exponentially increasing **build costs**. A significant portion lies in the permit fees and development charges. And while we are fortunate that some of our local municipalities have been able to waive these fees, we also understand the revenue these municipalities are sacrificing to do so.

We hope the province will consider funding these fees to municipalities on behalf of non-profit affordable housing providers, as this would help support the municipal infrastructure that our homes – and our partner families – benefit from.

There are two things that our Affiliate needs more than anything else – Land, and Money. Of the two, Land is more difficult to acquire, due to scarcity and cost. And while the province has taken steps to accelerate the sale of surplus lands, we believe your current land divestiture process could be improved.

We would like to see Ontario shift this process so that the creation of an affordable housing component becomes a condition of sale, and so non-profits like Habitat for Humanity are given greater access to this available land for either purchase or donation from the province.

The other thing we need is MONEY, just like everyone else does. And, believe it or not, **I'm not here today to ask you for money** – (although I'm not going to say “no” if you put some in there for us).

Budgets are all about revenues and expenses. And not just **what** you earn and spend, but **how** you earn (and spend) it.

At Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward Hastings, our expertise lies in building and repairing homes, operating retail stores, and volunteer coordination and management.

Along the housing continuum that stretches from homelessness to market-price home ownership, our affiliate exists in the space where people move from affordable renting, to affordable home ownership. Yet, Habitat for Humanity can help solve our current housing crisis in so many other ways – and, in doing so, fund our own core programs that build, maintain, and grow affordable home ownership opportunities.

Through our own research, we already know that Habitat for Humanity turns every dollar we spend on homebuilding and renovation into four dollars of community impact.

Now, imagine our affiliate taking a dollar that the Province will already spend – for example, on repairs or renovations to social housing, or to building and expanding the inventory of social housing in Ontario - and watching those same dollars **also** have that additional four dollars of community impact.

POINT FIVE of the FIVE-POINT PLAN outlined in More Homes, More Choice is INNOVATION. Minister Clark is quoted as saying that the province wants to “encourage more innovation and creativity in Ontario’s housing sector.”

There is a **tremendous** opportunity for the Government of Ontario to facilitate a greater impact of spending dollars by building and growing partnerships with non-profit agencies such as Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward Hastings for the delivery of construction, renovation, and repair services.

We would encourage the province to investigate ways in which these dollars might be directed towards non-profit organizations that can provide needed services for other provincially funded entities. In doing so, there is a duplicative value to those funds in helping your government achieve its housing, infrastructure, and social goals.

Habitat for Humanity can also help the province build a larger skilled workforce, one that creates more skilled tradespeople who are so desperately needed across the province to help solve the current housing crisis.

We are exploring partnerships with post-secondary institutions, where our affiliate organization can provide experiential learning for college students in trades, social work, marketing, administration, and retail merchandising programs.

Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward Hastings would be very interested in engaging with the province, municipalities, and their funded agencies to further explore test initiatives or pilot projects like these, that we might begin to pursue in partnership.

Once again, I want to thank you for allowing me to present to you today, and in closing, let me leave you with this. While the many staff and volunteers who work with Habitat for Humanity affiliates across this province are focused on changing the lives of others, we soon learn that the first life we change is our own.

It is our hope that, through stronger partnerships and innovative funding models, we can help the province solve our existing housing crisis, and in doing so move closer to **our** goal of a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. And that starts here. Thank you.