

NDP Caucus News

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Dinn Says Minister Must Clarify Future of 106 at Horizons

NL NDP Leader Jim Dinn (St. John's Centre) is calling on the Minister of Social Supports and Well-Being to clarify the future of the 106 at Horizons transitional supportive housing initiative, run by End Homelessness St. John's, as rumours swirl about its possible closure.

While the origins of 106 at Horizons were mired in controversy over a lucrative deal with Liberal donors, the need for transitional housing with wraparound supports remains clear in St. John's and across the province. With rumours that 106 at Horizons may be closing, and no mention of it in the provincial budget, Dinn is raising concerns about its future, and about where the current residents will go if it shuts down.

"106 at Horizons came from a last-minute Liberal attempt to eliminate Tent City. Transitional housing with true wraparound supports is necessary, but if the Liberals had bought that building outright, it could have been a public resource that would strengthen and expand those services," said Dinn. "It was revealed by the media that the current government will shut down this facility. For a government that says there will be no homelessness under their administration, this certainly wouldn't be a positive step forward."

Dinn is also concerned with the rise in spending for shelters, including for-profit shelters that make money off the most vulnerable in our province. While shelters are needed, they must be treated as an intermediary measure – not a solution. Dinn says that if governments plan to feed more public money into for-profit shelters, homelessness will never be eradicated in this province.

"During the campaign, the NDP highlighted and ran on the promise to get rid of for-profit shelters – as no one should be making money off the backs of those in our province in need of help and compassion. Vulnerable people should never be used for profit," said Dinn. "But I have to question now why the PCs are increasing the emergency shelter funding in this budget, and if this is because they plan to get rid of Horizons at 106. We already spent around \$14 million a year for for-profit shelters, and now we will be spending \$23 million. This isn't a solution."

"Wraparound supports and resources are essential to help lift people out of homelessness, so I am calling on the Minister to clarify what the future holds for this facility. If it is closing, I would expect the Minister to provide a clear plan – not only for the residents who currently live there, but for transitional housing more broadly."

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