



**South Shore Housing Action Coalition**

c/o Public Health Services, NSHA

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SouthShoreHousingActionCoalition

@sshousingaction

April 17, 2018

Privy Council Office  
Attn: Impact and Innovation Unit  
Room 1000  
85 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3

Re: Support for Town of Bridgewater Smart Cities Challenge Grant Application

To the Smart Cities Challenge jury panel,

This is a letter confirming the full support and confidence of the South Shore Housing Action Coalition in the Town of Bridgewater to address energy poverty by pursuing the Smart Cities Challenge grant.

The South Shore Housing Action Coalition (SSHAC) is a diverse group of community organizations and committed individuals working collaboratively since 2010 to build awareness and facilitate action on the need for quality, safe and affordable housing in Lunenburg and Queens Counties in particular, and Nova Scotia in general.

There is a growing need to address the growing gap between household incomes and the rising cost of living, including energy costs. In 2016, SSHAC completed a housing needs assessment to support understanding of the housing needs in our communities. When asked what residents' concerns were about their housing for the next 5 years, household energy-related costs were identified as the top concern.

The most recent Census of Canada numbers also point to the serious and urgent nature of the need to address issues related to low income and poverty. According to the 2016 Census of Canada, 27.9% of all households are living with core housing need, indicating that their homes are inadequate, unsuitable and/or unaffordable. Among tenants, it's 48.6%. Additionally, 22.4% of households are at, or below the threshold for the Low Income Measure, After Tax. The actions proposed by the Town of Bridgewater to address energy poverty will not only have a direct and profound impact on those households living with energy poverty, it will strengthen the whole community; when we all do better, we all do better!

The South Shore Housing Action Coalition remains committed to understanding the diversity and complexity of the housing issues confronting our communities, and working with partners like the Town of Bridgewater to facilitate action.

Since 2012, the Town of Bridgewater has been an active member of the South Shore Housing Action Coalition and has demonstrated their ability to be change leaders with a vision for a healthier and more sustainability community through various initiatives. Their experience and success in engaging town residents, businesses and community stakeholders over the past few years to imagine Bridgewater differently has resulted in real and tangible community change. They have revitalized the downtown core, implemented a public transit system, engaged the community to develop an open spaces network plan, and have become a leader in energy sustainability planning through Energize

Bridgewater. We are confident that they will continue to effectively partner and engage with community and provide strong leadership to address energy poverty through the proposed project.

SSHAC is fully prepared to support the efforts of the Town of Bridgewater to reduce energy poverty. We are pleased that the Town has identified this important issue to address. We are happy to work with the Town and other partners in an advisory capacity, and to support and facilitate the sharing of information about the project.

Making energy poverty a priority for action is a bold and powerful statement about the commitment of the Town of Bridgewater to its most vulnerable populations and speaks to the vision of the Town of Bridgewater as a diverse, thriving and healthy community. This project will directly improve housing conditions and affordability, promote active transportation, support the local economy through new investment opportunities, and improve the health of all residents of Bridgewater. Beyond these direct impacts, by prioritizing the needs of those living in energy poverty, the Town is not only sending a message to traditionally marginalized populations that their needs are a priority, they have also set the bar for other municipalities to follow suit.

We look forward to hearing that the Town of Bridgewater has been successful in their bid to receive the Smart Cities Challenge grant. An investment by the Smart Cities Challenge in this project is an investment in first and foremost in the lives of those living with energy poverty in the Town; and an investment in the health and wellbeing of the population. We're *energized* and excited to work together!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Helen Lanthier and Nancy Green in cursive script.

Helen Lanthier and Nancy Green, Planning Team Members  
South Shore Housing Action Coalition