



PRESS RELEASE



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Minister Fontana Highlights Federal Legislative Initiatives at Housing Outlook Conference

LONDON, Ontario, October 12, 2005 — Legislation to introduce measures to help Canadians deal with high energy costs will provide immediate relief to low-income Canadians, noted federal Labour and Housing Minister Joe Fontana today.

He also highlighted legislation to allocate future unanticipated federal surpluses which would see one-third of unanticipated surpluses go to tax relief to all taxpayers as a one time credit.

"This legislation is about balance: a clear, fully transparent approach that can target unexpected surpluses into spending on Canadian priorities, tax cuts for Canadians, and debt reduction to benefit future generations," said Minister Fontana.

Minister Fontana was addressing business and housing stakeholders at the annual Housing Outlook Conference hosted by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Canada's national housing agency.

"The energy relief measures, once passed in Parliament, will provide three benefits: providing assistance to low-income seniors and low-income families with children; helping families lower home heating costs through retrofit support; and fast tracking money for public transit," noted Minister Fontana. "In addition, this legislation will enable us to ensure market accountability through the creation of the Office of Petroleum Price Information."

The Minister's speech outlined the details of the proposed Energy Cost Benefit which would provide \$250 to families receiving the National Child Benefit, senior couples who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and \$125 to single seniors entitled to the GIS. Cheques would be issued in January 2006.

Minister Fontana also focused on a \$500 million five year proposed energy retrofit program to provide direct financial assistance of between \$3,500 and \$5,000 to low-income homeowners to defray the costs of items such as draft-proofing, heating system upgrades and window replacement. Cost savings will average about 30 per cent per household.

The program would be delivered through CMHC's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. Energy evaluations would be performed through Natural Resources Canada's Energuide for Houses service.

Owners of multiple-unit buildings and rooming houses will also be eligible to receive financial assistance of between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per unit. Savings generated by the changes would be passed along to the tenants. Energy audits on large buildings will be provided through EnerGuide for Existing Buildings.

These proposed measures support Project Green — the Government of Canada's broad environmental vision that links our economic competitiveness and prosperity to a sustainable future.

For more information:

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Peter Graham
Office of Minister Fontana
(819) 953-6646

Grace Thrasher
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
(613) 748-2375