

Leaky condo crisis continues for some B.C. homeowners

Mi-Jung Lee on more leaky condos



Some B.C. homeowners say the leaky condo crisis is far from over. July 19, 2010. (CTV)

Date: Monday Jul. 19, 2010 6:13 PM PT

Some homeowners in Surrey, B.C., say the leaky condo crisis still isn't over, and they're being hit with massive repair bills now that an interest-free government loan program has ended.

Owners in a 71-unit building in Cloverdale say their builder repaired some leak problems a few years ago. At the time, the work was covered by warranty.

But recent testing found moisture in the building's walls, and homeowners learned that they would be hit with a bill of about \$45,000.

For some owners, that was too much to handle, and they just walked away. Eight owners have yet to come up with the necessary cash.

"They're going to be foreclosing. I have until the end of December to come up with any monies," owner Shirley Hall said. "I guess I have to walk away from it."

The building was built in the 90s, at the height of the leaky condo crisis. For 11 years, the province gave interest-free loans to those facing massive repair bills.

A 2008 report done for the government said that after 2012, anywhere from 14,000 to 24,000 leaky condos would still need repairs, and that the demand for loans would be high until 2017.

Despite those findings, the government ended the loan program last year, and the housing ministry has told CTV News that there are no plans to restart the loans.

Housing Minister Rich Coleman said that water issues today could be a result of stratas not maintaining their properties.

He suggested that there are other options to cover repair costs.

"They should go to the bank and look at their equity, and see if they can use their equity on a loan. Even seniors can get reverse mortgages -- they're pretty economical," Coleman said.

With a report from CTV British Columbia's Mi-Jung Lee