

Indigenous housing group getting \$3.7M for much-needed repairs

Tenants have criticized living conditions in Tawaak Housing Association units

CBC – Nova Scotia

[Jean Laroche](#) · CBC News · Posted: Mar 02, 2020 7:10 PM AT | Last Updated: March 2, 2020



Nova Scotia Housing Minister Chuck Porter says the province would provide whatever support was necessary to the Tawaak Housing Association to ensure the repair work gets done. (Jean Laroche/CBC)

Relief may soon be on the way for Indigenous tenants of a non-profit housing association in Nova Scotia that have had to put up with leaking windows and doors, holes in the walls and ceilings, loose banisters and mouldy apartments.

Ottawa and the Nova Scotia government are providing the Tawaak Housing Association with \$3.7 million this year to pay for much-needed repairs to 36 units, as well as maintain existing affordable housing programs and rental rates with 51 rent supplements.

[Last month, some Tawaak tenants spoke out about what they said are unsafe living conditions and a lack of maintenance on their buildings.](#)

Glooscap First Nation Chief Sidney Peters, chair of the association's board, said he was excited about the new funding deal.

"These funds [are] really going to make a big difference to our Native housing here in Nova Scotia," said Peters on Monday at a news conference in the foyer at Province House.



Tawaak Housing replaced Melissa Prosper's kitchen countertop after receiving an order by the Halifax Regional Municipality in November 2019. The new countertop is already peeling and mould appears underneath. (Submitted by Melissa Prosper)

But almost in the same breath, Peters accused the federal government of having failed "their fiduciary responsibilities" toward First Nations in the Atlantic region.

"We need over 9,000 units just to bring up the housing stock here, you know on the reserves and in the community, excluding the urban Native," he said.

Peters said Tawaak had been conducting an assessment of the units to determine what work needed to be done and which repairs were most urgent. He said the repairs could include work to roofing, siding, windows and furnaces.



The roof above one of the rooms in Prosper's home caused the ceiling to collapse and water to penetrate the walls. (Submitted by Melissa Prosper)

Nova Scotia's Minister of Housing, Chuck Porter, said the province was glad to partner with Tawaak and would provide whatever assistance it needed to ensure the work got done.

"I can't speak to what has been done in the past or any of those concerns, but what I can tell [is] we've got a great partnership with Chief Peters and the folks at Tawaak," he said.



Glooscap First Nation Chief Sidney Peters, chair of the Tawaak Housing Association's board, says he's excited about the new funding deal. (Jean Laroche/CBC)

"Our goal is to work with them, to share our expertise if they need that in any way, shape or form."

It's unclear when the renovations will start, but a company hired to assess the state of the 36 units has completed that preliminary work.