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BC Policy of Municipal Self-Determination Fails Millennials

VRBA recently gave a presentation to BC's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, which makes recommendations on government policies and the budget. We said it's time to admit the provincial policy of municipal self-determination has failed an entire generation of millennials trying to purchase a home. Mythical explanations for rising prices have been used and demand-side taxes implemented - to no effect. Historic low housing supply and spiraling prices continue.

Property Transfer Tax revenue is up \$360 million due to "higher prices and limited inventory." This may benefit the provincial government, but it's eroding the ability of young people to afford a home.

There is a large demographic of millennials starting families and a 55% increase in immigration requiring reasonably affordable housing.

That's not going to happen without mandatory regional planning, which does not exist under municipal self-determination. The CRD's claims of growth and housing strategies are illusions in a region of 13 official community plans.

Housing Needs Reports reveal Metchosin and Highlands have zero purpose-built rentals. Non-profits avoid proposing affordable housing projects in Oak Bay, a challenging municipality which also deems duplex zoning and secondary suites illegal during a housing crisis.

North Saanich has a vocal anti-development group opposing even a review of their Official Community Plan.

Federal election candidates promise to spend billions of taxpayers' dollars to build government housing, while 200 development applications gather dust in Saanich.

All of this dysfunction did not happen overnight. BC governments of every political stripe have supported the policy of municipal self-determination and therefore undermined responsible regional planning.

The only solution for boosting housing supply and affordability is mandatory regional planning and prioritizing housing over municipal autonomy.

We can have either more housing affordability or municipal self-determination, but it has become very clear we can't have both.



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