

After years of BC NDP inaction, BC Greens promise leaseholders the protection they deserve

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Ləkʷəŋən [LEKWUNGEN] TERRITORY / VICTORIA, B.C. — Today the BC Greens announced new protections for people living in housing subject to long-term leasehold contracts. They were joined by leaseholders who have been deeply affected by skyrocketing, unexplained costs, and who have been seeking relief from the BC NDP government, to no avail.

"People living in housing subject to long-term leasehold contracts aren't protected by the law, and corporate landlords are taking full advantage,

squeezing exorbitant profits out of people's homes," said Emily Lowan, Leader of the BC Greens and candidate for Saanich North and the Islands. "In 2024 NDP MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert consulted with leaseholders and wrote an extensive report. But like too many other reports commissioned by the BC NDP, it's now collecting dust while everyday British Columbians suffer."

An estimated 2,500 homes in B.C., mostly in Victoria and Vancouver's West End, are held under long-term leaseholds, often called 99-year leases. Because leaseholds fall outside both the Residential Tenancy Act and the Strata Property Act, residents have no cap on fee increases, no right to see how their money is spent, and no affordable way to fight back. Most who took part in the Province's 2024 engagement were

seniors on low or fixed incomes, and some reported neighbours already forced to sell.

"Residents are paying thousands in unnecessary maintenance costs, dispute resolution fees, and other unexplained expenses. After the BC NDP failed to act on MLA Herbert's recommendations, these residents asked local BC NDP MLA Grace Lore for help. Her first suggestion was another study," said Raj Sahota, BC Greens candidate for Victoria-Beacon Hill. "The solutions are obvious. People living in housing subject to long-term leasehold contracts deserve the full protection of the law."

"We bought our leaseholds from companies that are now trying to 'renovict' us by piling on unnecessary maintenance projects with unfettered costs," said Katharine Ferguson, a resident of a leasehold property in Victoria. "We're not protected by the

Residential Tenancy Act or the Strata Property Act, and building owners are taking full advantage. Many of us are seniors on fixed incomes, and these skyrocketing levies may drive us into homelessness. After our protest outside David Eby's campaign office last week, the BC NDP promised to enact legislation, but I'm not holding my breath."

The BC Greens will introduce legislation to protect residential leaseholders, including:

- **Fair limits on costs:** caps on fee increases and special assessments, reserve funds and months of notice. Limitations on charging leaseholders for capital improvements and a ban on passing the owner's legal costs back to leaseholders.
- **Open books:** audited financial statements, multiple independent quotes on major projects, and residents can see quotes and reports.
- **A voice in their own homes:** the right to form a leaseholders' association, meet with the building owner, and use common areas to organize.
- **Affordable justice:** access to the Civil Resolution Tribunal or Residential Tenancy Branch instead of B.C. Supreme Court, and no passing dispute costs on to residents.