



**URGENT** – March 15, 2020

Hon. Doug Downey  
Attorney General of Ontario  
McMurtry-Scott Bldg 11<sup>th</sup> Flr  
720 Bay St  
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9  
c/o [joseph.hillier@ontario.ca](mailto:joseph.hillier@ontario.ca)

Linda Lamoureux  
Executive Chair, Tribunals Ontario  
Ferguson Block Box 250  
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Toronto, ON M5G 2K8  
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Dear Mr. Downey and Ms. Lamoureux,

**RE: COVID-19 mitigation measures  
Call for immediate stoppage of evictions**

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I write to you on behalf of the Greater Toronto Clinic Housing Advocates, a committee of lawyers, paralegals, and organizers who work to protect and advance the rights of tenants and other renters in the Greater Toronto Area. We appreciate the steps that your offices have each taken in the past week to meet the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic by announcing plans to postpone court and tribunal sittings. **We now write to ask that you take further steps to avoid adding any more Ontarians to homeless and shelter populations that are already at heightened risk of uncontrolled COVID-19 transmission.**

We ask that the Attorney General direct the Court Enforcement Office (Sheriff) to immediately cease all enforcement of existing eviction orders against renters and writs of possession against homeowners. We ask that the Landlord and Tenant Board not only postpone in-person hearings of eviction applications, but to avoid scheduling telephone, electronic, and written hearings of eviction applications as well.

These are fair and responsible epidemiological responses of the type that have already been adopted by cities within California, Florida, and New York. Sudden loss of income is a serious risk for renters and homeowners during this pandemic. Homelessness causes increased utilization of health resources, especially in our hospitals. The last thing that we need right now are more people living in encampments, entering shelters, or couch-surfing. While homelessness and underhousing remain long-term issues in their own right, we hope that you will agree that the justice system can and should take these immediate steps in the collective interest of all Ontarians.

Sincerely,

GREATER TORONTO CLINIC HOUSING ADVOCATES  
Per: Benjamin Ries, Downtown Legal Services, University of Toronto