

#755

CMHC 2166  
9/79

1W:  
BRIAN

ew Committee Record of Decision

RESTRICTED

Record of decision  
number:  
82:252

FX - 1-613-992-3192

Submission No: 332/82


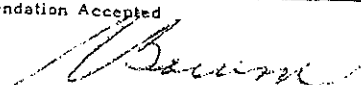
PROBLEMS IN HOUSING NEWFOUNDLAND

(last 2 pages  
is letter in question)

On 22 June 1982, the above submission was considered by  
ew Committee which recommended that:

1. the Director, National Office Support Centre, draft a letter in response to the Minister of Development for Newfoundland stating:
  - a) that CMHC will not provide financial assistance but will provide support for a public communications campaign;
  - b) the Corporation's view that campaign should be educational in nature rather than a publicity campaign;
2. prior to drafting the letter, the Director, National Office Support Centre, consult with the Executive Director, Public Affairs, regarding an appropriate communications strategy to ensure the Corporation's objectives are met;
3. the draft letter be tabled for discussion at MRC on 28 June.

PRESENT: CHAIRMAN - R.J. Boivin  
 MEMBERS - G.D. Anderson, L.I. Birtz, E.A. Flichel,  
 B. Lacombe  
 OTHERS - P.C. Connolly, K.A. Malcolm, J. O'Brien, L.D. Oler

Wording Approved 		Recommendation Accepted 	
For: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implementation by proponent		<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Committee	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

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Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement

National Office

Bureau National

Memorandum

Mémoire

To A MANAGEMENT

Our file Notre référence

5820-35

Your file Votre référence

Re Sujet MOISTURE INDUCED PROBLEMS IN HOUSING IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Date June 17, 1982

PROBLEM

A letter (copy attached) received by Mr. Cosgrove from the Honourable Neil Windsor, Minister of Development for Newfoundland, refers to this issue.

The letter seems to indicate good communication and good relations in the field and this is borne out by our field staff reports.

The conclusion that moisture generated in the home is an important factor in problem houses is also borne out by our own reports. The further conclusion that a communications program is needed is logical.

The clear inference that may be derived from the wording of the letter that there is some responsibility on Federal and Provincial governments to assist homeowners and landlords is unfortunate. Both or either level of government may wish to assume such an obligation, but would appear to be free to do so or not as they may deem appropriate.

OBJECTIVE

To secure Management's approval of the courses of action and critical element of response to the letter from the Honourable Neil Windsor.

FACTORS

- The Province of Newfoundland appear anxious to take action in response to what is known from the consultants interim report on the moisture induced problems in housing in Newfoundland.
- C.M.H.C. can assist their endeavours with knowledge and skills and could appropriately assist in the funding and design of a communications strategy.
- The terms of reference approved by Management for actions of C.M.H.C. related to this problem provide for the Technical Research Project Manager to make appropriate technical information available and for the Field Operations Project Manager to advise the field on appropriate liaison with bodies

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outside the Corporation. Provision is also made for ICOM to advise Management on communications strategies and to provide technical and design input into communications plans. Legal Division is to provide advice to the Project Managers on public statements.

- Although the consultants interim report permits some mid term re-orientation of activities and supports additional activities planned to verify technical assumptions, it also provides enough information to justify the communications initiative suggested in the attached letter.
- There is nothing in the consultants interim report that establishes a responsibility on governments for remedial action and for financial support to homeowners or landlords whose interests are affected by moisture induced problems in housing.

### ALTERNATIVES

#### A. Concerning conclusions in the letter

1. That "major contributors to the condensation problems are, in fact, the living habits and lifestyles of the housing occupants." This appears to be in line with the information we have via the interim report of the consultants.
2. That "we must also address the development of an assistance program for homeowners and landlords."

This conclusion does not follow from any information or recommendations in our possession. Housing units built to similar standards in other parts of Canada and subject to different conditions of use are not subject to the same problems.

C.M.H.C. could:

- (a) ignore the suggestion
- (b) agree with the suggestion
- (c) point out to the Provincial Minister that the phrase in question as well as the additional statement that "the onus rests with both governments to take immediate action" are not justified, and may well result in an exaggeration of the true dimensions of the problem, brought about by expectations of material government assistance.

Course (c) is the one advocated.

#### B. Courses of action arising from the conclusions.

1. Need for a "publicity campaign" or more properly a communications program.
  - (a) C.M.H.C. might agree with the approach and adopt a passive and responsive attitude to the issue of publicity in Newfoundland. Although this course of action appears to keep C.M.H.C. out of the limelight on what appears to be a contentious issue, it also

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leaves the Corporation less well able to control and influence the type of communications program which is eventually used and leaves too much room for error and misunderstanding to creep in.

- (b) C.M.H.C. might find the reaction of the Provincial Minister both appropriate and timely, but in the light of concerns over misunderstandings, which are not lessened by some of the wording in the letter, could desire and propose to take a lead role in the development and delivery of a communications plan. This course while bringing the benefits of control would most likely have an alienating effect on the Provincial government, and would most certainly link C.M.H.C.'s name to moisture problems in housing.
- (c) The final and recommended alternative is for C.M.H.C. to indicate both its agreement with the need for communication and its concern over the unsupported apparent volunteering of aid to homeowners and landlords. Aid which might be construed as financial assistance and an admission of liability. Such a course of action would enable C.M.H.C. to remain in the background while making its technical skills and knowledge available and does not preclude C.M.H.C. providing some funding as well as planning for a communications program.

#### 6. PRODUCTIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

While some of C.M.H.C. actions in this matter could be construed as enlightened business approaches, the generality of the impact has to do with the Corporation's housing agency role and concern with housing quality.

#### 7. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The type of communications action proposed has been envisaged as an inherent part of C.M.H.C.'s actions in response to "moisture induced problems in housing in Newfoundland". Funds are allocated under the current Research Plan for the continuing investigatory activities and the issue of technical bulletins to the housebuilding industry is in the line of normal business for the N.O. Support Centre. There could be additional requirements for Part V funds to support a communications program and possible training activities which are not specifically allocated under current budgets.

#### 8. C.M.H.C. DIVISIONAL/REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The arrangement put in place at the time of the appointment of the Research and Field project managers appear to be working well.

#### 9. FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

The Atlantic Region General Manager and the Provincial Director - Newfoundland have copies of the letter and have been asked for their comment and advice.

10. INTERDEPARTMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Actions by E.M.&R. in funding a parallel study to that run by C.M.H.C. give concern. The concern would be that E.M.R. might feel impelled to develop corrective actions and communications programs independently. The impact of uncoordinated actions affecting housing in Newfoundland is felt directly by C.M.H.C. not by E.M.R.

11. PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

C.M.H.C.'s actions in relation to this issue have so far been perceived as judicious and appropriate by both industry and Provincial representatives. Management should approve any communications program.

12. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

No requirements beyond present arrangements.

13. CORRECTIVE ACTION

N/A

14. CONCLUSION

The attribution of a significant part of the problem to the living habits and lifestyles of the householders is correct and this situation can and should be improved by an appropriate communications program.

The assumption of responsibility for providing an assistance program and that because of previous actions - namely encouragement to homeowners to conserve energy, there is an "onus on both governments to take immediate action" is not justified, and could, if publicly enunciated, make the problem worse.



15. RECOMMENDATION

The reply prepared for the signature of the Minister responsible for C.M.H.C. to the letter of 1 June 1982 from the Honourable Neil Windsor will:

- (a) reflect the conclusions noted in this submission
- (b) propose that the communications strategy and program be developed in Newfoundland by the Government of Newfoundland but that C.M.H.C. be prepared to provide technical and design assistance and support, through I.C.O.M.

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- (c) Responsibility for the content of the proposed Ministerial reply and for action to follow up is with the Senior Vice President, Program Operations.



R. J. Boivin  
Senior Vice President  
Program Operations