

To the members of the Board of directors

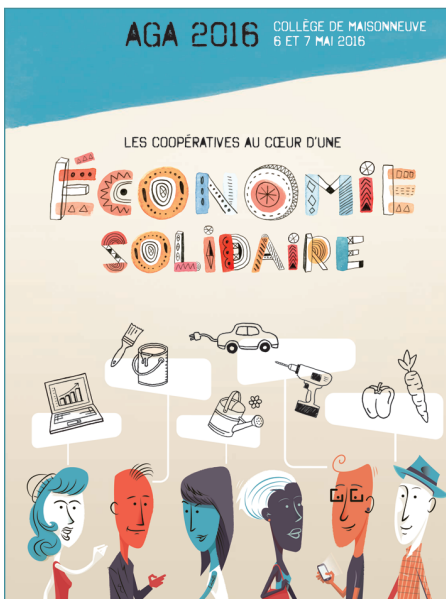
A Word from the president
FROM ONE BUDGET TO ANOTHER,
TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES:
FROM DISCOURAGEMENT TO
DISAPPOINTMENT

page 2

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2016 AGM

CO-OPERATIVES AT THE HEART OF A SOLIDARITY-BASED ECONOMY



The perpetual state of crisis in which capitalism puts us could not be more disastrous for our societies. To balance the situation, we must turn to new economic practices generated by the growing inequalities of

recent years and which are based on sharing, community involvement, proximity and respect for the environment.

Accorderies, urban agriculture, greening, car sharing, community tool workshops... the values and practices put forward by this current are returning in force, although they are not so new. In fact, they are the foundation of the co-operative movement and the source of our collective achievements that are our housing co-operatives.

At this AGM, the Federation proposes to examine how the movement can build relationships and partner with citizens' initiatives that are multiplying in order to meet needs such as feeding or transportation. Your co-operative is invited to participate in a huge brainstorming about the changes needed in the current economic model in order to put the needs of our society at the heart of all our actions.

More details details on 2016 AGM program on page 4.

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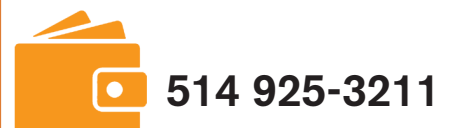
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ASSURANCES COOP

It is never too early
to save on your
property
insurance!



2016 CO-OPERATIVE
HOUSING FAIR

More details on page 4



FECHIMM eXpress

Newsletter from the **Fédération des coopératives d'habitation intermunicipale du Montréal métropolitain**

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A word from the president

FROM ONE BUDGET TO ANOTHER, TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES: FROM DISCOURAGEMENT TO DISAPPOINTMENT

Discouragement: Quebec's budget

After the Quebec budget's presentation, our fears are confirmed. While we were many actors insisting, before minister Leitão's budget was tabled, on the need and interest, both economic and social, for the Quebec society to continue and especially expand the financing of social housing, the government chose to ignore our arguments.

Beyond this ideologically rigid and economically wrong approach based on a Liberal sauce austerity, it is against the very relevance for the State to participate in the development and financing of social housing that this government stands. The slow yet inexorable death of the AccèsLogis program has been confirmed in this budget.

Thus, by maintaining the budget for carrying out projects at the 2009 costs, producing only 1500 social housing units (how many for co-operatives?), by diverting part of the funding for the realization of social housing to the rent supplement program, which primarily benefits some landlords, the government removes its meaning and its ability to actually act on inequalities and dysfunctions in housing produced by the private market.

The disappointment: The federal budget

Mixed, that's the least negative term that comes to mind to describe my feelings about the first Trudeau government budget. From the outset, after the Siberian conservative years, any progress, as superficial, inadequate and temporary as it is, appears as providential by comparison.

In this context, the announcements related to housing rights in the federal budget deliver. They fit perfectly in a Keynesian economics approach, which implies that, in times of economic downturn, the State must provide the fuel to start the engine of the capitalist car. Fuel, a new driver, a different course, but mainly we do not change vehicle.

In this sense, measures such as the two year \$574 million program for energy renovation and water efficiency in existing social housing or the specific budget of \$200 million for housing for seniors and important efforts made in favour of Aboriginal and northern communities represent one-off investments and, while important and positive, they are non-structural and partial.

Still more inadequate and worrying, the modest temporary commitments to the most disadvantaged households. At \$30 million over two years for all of Canada, we can't even talk about a breath of fresh air...

By never mentioning co-operative and collective housing and by leaving us in the dark on this elastic and relative concept of "affordable housing", this government frankly worries us and, at this moment, does not show a real will to address our movement's fundamental issues mainly, concerning housing, the maintenance and development of the housing co-operative model, the accessibility of such housing units to all those needing it and who identify with this model, as well as the democratic, autonomous and distinct character of the co-operative model compared to the private market.

Luc Brisebois, president

Bill 83 FECHIMM DEMANDS THE PRESERVATION OF THE QUEBEC COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND

FECHIMM expressed its opposition to Quebec Housing Corporation (Société d'Habitation du Québec) appropriating the Quebec Community Housing Fund (Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire - FQHC) in a brief submitted during the ongoing consultations on Bill 83.

FECHIMM expressed doubt that SHQ would demonstrate better management and accountability once it has absolute control of the Fund, as it never fulfilled its obligations under the Fund agreement.

FECHIMM recalls that SHQ has still not reimbursed to the Fund the amounts collected before its implementation and which had been entrusted to it. It also failed to carry out complete buildings evaluations when co-operatives' reach their tenth year, before forcing them to pay their contributions to the Fund. This approach has undermined several co-operatives and added a financial burden on members, according to the Federation.

Endorsing the proposal of the FQHC Board, FECHIMM is urging the government to intervene in revising the modus operandi related to these compulsory contributions. It also calls for the establishment of a responsible body in which the contributors to the Fund would together own a majority of the votes without any veto being assigned to any member whatsoever.

FECHIMM considers that it is in the interest of the government, as well as in that of the co-operative sector, to have tools to reduce its dependence on the State while serving as economic development levers. This is the role that the Fund, well nourished and effectively managed, can play.

FECHIMM's brief (FR) is published on fechimm.coop website

QUEBEC BUDGET

ANOTHER SETBACK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL HOUSING



Despite all the demands for a reinvestment in the only social housing development program, the Quebec government has chosen to ignore the desperate needs and the worsening housing conditions of many sectors of the population.

In its budget tabled yesterday, Quebec announced that the slimming treatment started in 2015-2016 with the AccèsLogis program will continue. The government will invest \$128 million in the construction of 1,500 new social housing units over the next year.

For Luc Brisebois, FECHIMM's president, "this decision, while not a surprise, is nonetheless deplorable because it further widens the gap between supply and need for housing for hundreds of thousands of Quebec households who spend too much of their income on housing."

FECHIMM, like all the organizations working in the sector, demanded funding for developing a minimum of 3,000 new housing units per year on a recurring basis, although it evaluates that 10,000 units are needed every year. Quebec's commitment therefore meets only 15% of the current needs according to the Federation.

For FECHIMM, the government's refusal to index the project delivery budgets, which are based on 2009 costs, and to restore the Quebec Renovation Program to fund the necessary actions to the aging housing stock also illustrates its insensitivity towards the needs of people with inadequate housing.

Federal Budget

BETWEEN HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

While welcoming the housing investments planned in the 2016-2017 federal budget, FECHIMM is disappointed by the temporary nature of the aid granted to maintain the subsidies to low-income tenants in housing cooperatives that are at the end of their operating agreement.

The budget tabled yesterday by the Minister Bill Morneau, provides a budget of \$ 30 million over two years to help social housing providers, including co-operatives, to maintain subsidies allowing households to pay rent based on their income at the end of their operating agreement with CMHC.

They said that this additional support "will be provided on a temporary basis, until long-term methods to help the social housing sector to become financially self-sufficient can be developed through consultations with the provinces, the territories and stakeholders."

According to Luc Brisebois, President of FECHIMM "after the hopes raised by the election promises, this announcement can only be disappointing. Not only the amount granted to help low-income tenants seem low, but it is an illusion to think that social housing could ever finance itself. The state will always have a role to play in the support of social housing." Luc Brisebois said that the Federation intends to participate in the search proposed by the federal government for long term solutions.



There is room for hope

However, after ten years of Conservative government, there is hope in the many investments announced for housing. The approval of an aid package of \$ 574 million over two years for the energy efficiency improvements and water efficiency projects in existing social housing is one of the measures which may be chosen by the cooperatives who must invest in the maintenance their buildings.

The investments announced for social infrastructure, of which \$ 2.3 billion over two years are to provide Canadians with better access to affordable housing also bodes well for the Federation. However, many questions remain. The meaning of the term "affordable housing" and the way the funds granted by Ottawa will be invested, which funds will flow through most of the provinces and territories, are some of those questions.

Sale of Radio-Canada building

FECHIMM SUPPORTS THE CLAIMS OF THE COMMUNITY

FECHIMM endorsed the claims made by organizations of the Centre-Sud district requesting the Crown Corporation to review its proposed move, to continue to provide leadership and the role of catalyst which it still has.

Co-signor of an open letter sent to the media, FECHIMM sees the project as the Crown Corporation abdicating its responsibilities and its commitments to the Centre-Sud district community.

The organizations fear that CBC's departure will cause the collapse of the Cité des Ondes and lead to the decomposition of an important economic hub of the Centre-Sud district.

They argue that CBC must return to being opened to the community as they showed in 2007 by organizing a wide consultation on a redevelopment project site and by setting up an advisory committee of organizations representing the district.

This advisory committee had recommended that the redevelopment of the site be the opportunity for CBC to confirm its presence in the east of Montreal's downtown, to embrace a local mission and increase its presence and impact in the district.

The letter (FR) is published on fechimm.coop

LES COOPÉRATIVES AU CŒUR D'UNE



ON THE PROGRAM FOR THE 2016 AGM

2015 results

The 2015 activity report and the auditor's report will be presented on opening night, Friday, May 6. On this first day of the 2016 AGM, we will also be able to analyze the situation and present the budget for the new year.

Panel : co-operatives at the heart of a solidarity-based economy

Guest speakers will be invited to trigger the discussions and the debate around motions by proposing a reflection on the new forms of trade arising from the collaborative economy. We will address here the opportunities for housing co-operatives to participate in and make our economy more solidarity-based. The presentation will be followed by a discussion period.

Proposals processing

Your co-operative can still submit motions at the 2016 AGM. In accordance with the general by-laws of the Federation, the assembly's motions will be discussed Saturday, May 7, at 1:30 p.m.

Election of the Board

Four positions will be available on FECHIMM's Board of Directors. Among these, three will be reserved for members sitting on the board of their own co-operative. The elections of the board members will be held Saturday, May 7, at 3:45 p.m.

Candidates can receive a free training on the role and responsibilities of a director of the Federation on April 12. To register for this training, please contact us at 514 843-6929, extension 228.

ALL THE INFORMATION AT FECHIMM.COOP

- Special section and participation kit
- Registration of delegates and observers
- Regulations concerning the elections and the motions processing
- Forms and supporting documents
- AGM's full program

The notice and participation kit will be mailed to your co-op four weeks before the AGM.

2016 CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FAIR



At its annual meeting, FECHIMM will hold a CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FAIR on Friday afternoon, starting at 3:30, and Saturday at noon.

On Friday, it is with enthusiasm that the Federation's employees and key partners will be on site to offer flash consultations and answer your questions on hot topics regarding your co-operative. You will also be able to attend mini-conferences and workshops for small groups. Here are some of the topics proposed:

What legal obligations my co-op must pay attention to since the Co-operatives' Act was updated in 2015?

What does the enforcement of Article 221.2.3 imply?

What steps have to be followed in a major renovation project and how can we get funding to implement it?

Can my co-op obtain the status of municipality and thus obtain GST-QST reimbursements?

How can my co-op's web page on FECHIMM's portal make it easier to recruit new members?

How can my co-op deal with the end of its operating agreement?

How can I save on my internet, telephone and cable tv services with Coop3P?

How can my co-op save on insurance premiums ? How can FECHIMM's training workshops help manage my co-operative?

Saturday at noon, the suppliers and partners of the AVANTAGES COOP program will be available to present the different services and products offered to co-operatives and their members in order to facilitate their co-operative management and to save money.