

## BACKGROUND

The South Shore Housing Action Coalition (SSHAC) seeks to build awareness and facilitate action on the need for improved access to healthy, safe and affordable housing options for all.

Regulation and enforcement of minimum housing standards has been a topic of conversation for the Coalition and its members over the years, recognizing that the conditions in which people live have an impact on their health and safety.

In 2013 we worked with our local municipal units to develop a resolution for the former Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, petitioning the Province of Nova Scotia to explore the implementation of minimum housing standards for Nova Scotia. This was suggested as a possible solution to the challenges smaller, rural municipalities face in enforcing standards with limited resources. The resolution passed at UNSM, however there was not interest from the province to explore minimum standards.

There is still concern about living conditions and we remain curious about what solutions exist to address health and safety concerns related to housing. This research identifies a number of opportunities for further discussion with communities about how to address these challenges.

Many thanks to our partner, Dalhousie University's School of Architecture and Planning, and Nikolas for his research!



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# EVALUATING THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MINIMUM RENTAL HOUSING STANDARDS IN NOVA SCOTIA

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## WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

### RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this exploratory study was to provide the South Shore Housing Action Coalition (SSHAC) with an assessment that will indicate the strengths and weaknesses of minimum housing standards by-laws in Nova Scotia.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the written quality of minimum housing standards by-laws in Nova Scotia?
2. What is the effectiveness of minimum housing standards? What challenges and opportunities are presented during the implementation of these standards?
3. What is the potential role of the province in supporting municipalities in the effective implementation of minimum housing standards?

## WHAT WE LEARNED

### THEMES

Through the research 4 major themes emerged:

- Minimum Standards have not been written to address their unintended consequences.
- Minimum Standards do technically achieve what they were initially set out to achieve.
- Six out of eight interviewees were in favor of having minimum standards, but all interviewees identified significant areas for improvement.
- Interviewees were divided on whether or not it is the province's responsibility to improve minimum standards, but all interviewees had suggestions for how the province could provide support.

### KEY POINTS

#### Minimum housing standards by-laws should be implemented.....

Nothing else as specifically designed to deal with maintenance issues.

Nothing else that is as protective of tenant's and landlord's rights in regards to housing maintenance.

#### ..... With some substantial caveats

Research into the context of where minimum standards might be applied is required

Flexibility is needed in the enforcement process.

## WHAT WE CAN DO TO TAKE ACTION

- Advocate for better housing support services, grants, and supports for jurisdictions enforcing minimum standards.
- Encourage those municipal units without minimum standards to consider them.

**VISIT [HTTP://SSHAC.CA](http://SSHAC.CA) TO READ THE FULL RESEARCH REPORT**