

Hello, my name is Titina Stephens. I came to Canada a year ago as a refugee from Bangladesh. I have since suffered a bad housing situation where my landlady does many improper things: walking into my apartment without warning, forcing me to pay a deposit, refusing to deal with the cockroaches and rats issues. She has always said it is up to me and she won't help.

I've gone to the TAL to address these issues but the staff there made racist remarks to me and said I didn't have enough evidence to prove she enters my apartment against my wishes.

Therefore, your certification project is important to me. I have lived the realities of how the system is failing and I think your certification proposal is too optimistic.

How are we supposed to trust landlords to self-report their issues when they, like my landlady, refuse to deal with them? Instead, I think tenants should be surveyed to report on the issues in their apartment as only they know the reality of the situation. Landlord's just rush through and minimize issues, we cannot just trust their word of mouth.

In cases where more drastic issues are reported by tenants, inspectors should come in and see for themselves. We need people to put pressure on landlords to maintain the standard of housing. Not the tenant nor the landlord should be responsible for this oversight, only the inspectors. For more drastic issues inspectors should come in and inspect before certification is achieved.

As for the 5-year roll out, the city is acting like there is no urgency. This should be instated much sooner. Obviously elected officials are no longer living out of rental housing and don't realize how dire it is.

Also, when tenants leave an apartment, an inspection should occur to assure the quality before the next tenant is allowed to move in. There should be a quality assurance form landlords and tenants fill out when lease is terminated and give to the city. No matter what the rent and the apartment conditions should not just be reported to the city every five years. Terrible things can happen in that time. At the minimum the rent and conditions should be reported every year.

People should be able to contact higher authorities for help in these situations. The police and the regie de logement all shrug off the responsibility and the inspectors should pick up the slack.

Titina Stephens