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NEWS RELEASE

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AUTHORITY HOSTS CANADIAN HOUSING PROFESSIONALS ON FACT-FINDING TRIP

Visitors find lessons in new OHA developments, financial challenges

OAKLAND, CA—Nearly 50 non-profit and government housing providers from Canada recently visited Oakland to study some of the housing authority's recent successes. Members of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA), which serves more than 760 non-profit organizations providing housing in 220 communities across Ontario and whose members include municipal and private non-profits of all sizes, visited Alameda, Oakland and San Francisco to share experiences and innovative initiatives.

The trip was the fifth ONPHA Large Provider Study Tour, an annual event that allows large social housing providers in Ontario an opportunity to network while sharing experiences with their international counterparts. The tour alternates between the United States and the United Kingdom.

On the Oakland leg of their tour, the ONPHA members toured three Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) properties—Lion Creek Crossing, Tassafaronga Village and Lockwood Gardens—before ending their visit with an afternoon forum on education and housing, which featured community members, Oakland Unified School District administrators and OHA officials.

The award-winning developments at Lion Creek and Tassafaronga were popular with the visitors, who said OHA's reputation as a problem-solving organization is what drew them to the Bay Area this year.

“Oakland seems to be a place where a lot of innovation is happening. There have been a lot of challenges historically and there has been a lot of innovation to overcome those challenges,” ONPHA President Keith Ward said. “I think everybody was most intrigued by the developments in terms of the architecture. The architecture was absolutely gorgeous. Being able to see the new green technologies ... actually working and functioning was really good for us. It was (also) fascinating for us to hear about the cost structures here, which are rather higher than what we have at home. Again it's a challenge for you to make the higher cost environments work, so what you've been able to learn has been very instructive for us. Seeing how you do those things is useful in our own advocacy.”

Long recognized as one of the leading housing authorities in the nation, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) continues to be an innovator in the field of public housing. OHA provides housing for approximately 10 percent of Oakland's families, operating 3,160 public housing and project based section 8 units. Presently, 10,958 Oakland families, elderly and disabled rent with Section 8 vouchers. The average annual income of OHA families is about \$15,000.