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connected

Attn: Director General  
Financial Services Division  
Financial Sector Policy Branch  
Department of Finance Canada

Re: Consultation on Strengthening Canada's External Complaint Handling System

We are pleased to provide this letter of support and collaboration for Prosper Canada's recommendations on the consultation regarding the strengthening of Canada's External Complaint Handling System.

Disability Alliance BC is a provincial, cross-disability voice in British Columbia that champions issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications. Plan Institute is a nationally registered non-profit that works to improve the lives of people with disabilities by collaborating on community-based projects, offering a suite of learning initiatives, and advocating for policy reform.

Question 1 of the consultation addresses the appropriateness of the guiding principles set forth in the consultation overview, and attempts to ensure the principles are sufficiently robust to appropriately guide future policy directions on the structure and key elements of the External Complaint Handling System in Canada.

We recommend that the guiding principles for Canada's external complaint handling system accords to the principles outlined in the *Accessible Canada Act*, which stipulate that:

- everyone must be treated with dignity; everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have;
- everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society; everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire;
- laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect;
- persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures, and accessibility standards and regulations must be made with the goal of achieving the highest level of accessibility.

October 14, 2021

We agree with the guiding principle that all future policy directions remain accessible—that complaint handling services should be available at no cost to the consumer, be easy to access and understand, and be available in both official languages.

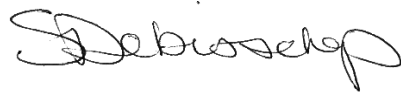
In addition, we recommend that all materials and complaint filing systems be available in plain language. We recommend that communications and materials be adapted to the technologies in common use by communities of persons with disabilities, and that information and communication systems should be made easily accessible to applicants through multiple methods, including mail, by phone, and online.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you wish to discuss our support for Prosper Canada's submission, or how we can ensure that Canada's External Complaint Handling System enshrines within it guiding principles that ensure true and full accessibility for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Helaine Boyd". The script is cursive and fluid.

Helaine Boyd,  
Executive Director - Disability Alliance BC

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephanie Debisschop". The script is cursive and fluid.

Stephanie Debisschop  
Executive Director - Plan Institute

October 14, 2021