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**From:** Andrea Arbic [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 2:09 PM  
**To:** Minister of Communities, Culture & Heritage; Office of the Legislative Counsel  
**Subject:** Changes to the Heritage Property Act

Dear Minister Ince and Ms. Whalen. I am writing to you in your role of Minister of Minister of Communities Culture and Heritage and Chair of the Law Amendments Committee, respectively.

I understand that the government is considering a number of changes to the Heritage Property Act, several of which I have serious concerns about. Namely:

1. **Changes to clauses 1, 3 and 8 of Bill 118, which would make it much easier to delete a building from the lists of protected heritage properties in Nova Scotia.** The clauses would allow deregistration of heritage properties on the basis of "significant financial difficulties" or "undue hardship to the owner."

As we have seen in the past, some owners of heritage buildings deliberately allow them to deteriorate and then claim they can't afford to fix them up, which they then use as justification for tearing them down. The proposed wording change will open the door wider to this type of type of abuse. Registration or deregistration should be based on the historic and architectural merits of the properties, not on the financial situations of the owners. If owners find themselves in financial difficulties, they have the option of selling the building. Deregistering a building wouldn't solve the owners' financial difficulties, so these two things should not be connected.

2. **Clause 9 of the Bill would repeal the permanent protection for municipal heritage properties in heritage conservation districts.**

. This would be a seriously regressive step. We should be looking at ways of increasing the protection of our heritage districts, not weakening it. One of the most important assets this province has is our heritage building stock. It is one of the defining features of our province. If we lose it, we will have lost a major part of the character that makes us what we are and attracts tourists to this province. People don't come here to see Purdy's Wharf, Waterfront Place or King's Landing – they can see buildings just like that in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. But those cities don't have a Barrington St. or a Schmidville. We do and we should do whatever we can to protect them and other heritage districts across this province.

3. **Clauses 2 and 7 would make it easier to deregister parts of heritage properties.** Again, we should be making it harder, not easier to deregister heritage buildings. Progressive jurisdictions around the world have come to recognize the social, environmental and economic importance of heritage buildings and they have seen heritage properties as an asset on which to build, not a hindrance to "progress." I have visited many cities that are a lot older than the ones we have here in Nova Scotia and they manage to protect their built heritage while still having modern, successful economies. If cities like Paris, Bologna, Charleston and Savannah, and countries like England, Ireland and Scotland, can marry heritage preservation and modern economies, why can't Nova Scotia? Do we simply lack the will, the vision?

Any changes to the heritage property act that would weaken the protection of heritage buildings and districts in Nova Scotia would be a deeply regressive move. There are few things that would seem to run as directly counter to the findings of the Ivany report than this. We don't have as much oil and gas as the western provinces do and we don't have a manufacturing sector that is as big as in Ontario and Quebec, but what we do have is in this province is cultural and natural landscape that can't be seen anywhere else in Canada. If we allow it to be destroyed, we still won't have as

much oil as the West and as much manufacturing as central Canada, and we also won't have the built heritage that attracts people to visit and move to this province.

I respectfully urge you not to weaken the protection for heritage in this province. In fact, I believe you would demonstrate leadership and vision by strengthening the protection of built heritage in this province.

Sincerely,

Andrea Arbic, Halifax



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