

**From:** Bill Polk [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** April 12, 2022 7:26 PM  
**To:** Office of the Legislative Counsel  
**Subject:** Fwd: Gillian's letter

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Gillian's Letter

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** polk gillian [REDACTED]  
**To:** [primier@novascotia.ca](mailto:primier@novascotia.ca) <[primier@novascotia.ca](mailto:primier@novascotia.ca)>;  
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**Sent:** Sunday, April 10, 2022, 12:07:17 PM EDT  
**Subject:** Tax Proposal

Dear Sir/Madame,

The proposed tax to make housing more affordable for full time residents is like painting a landscape with a wide brush and one color of paint. This plan does not take into account the different needs and wellbeing of the each community in Nova Scotia, nor does it offer additional solutions to ensure available housing.

It is beyond worrisome to read an interview with Finance Minister Allan MacMaster admitted that it is unclear if the new taxes will create housing opportunities or will impact rising house prices. Where is the process of balancing risk and reward before moving forward with such an extreme and one-size-fits all approach. To say, "There is no way to concretely know for sure until this is fully implemented," as quoted by the Canadian Press last week, seems like a cavalier attitude to a decision that likely will have serious long-term consequences. The government is gambling the welfare of communities for \$82 million dollars they do not have yet. That money might not come if there is a mass exodus of people who can not afford to keep family properties or seasonal ones, or work remotely in a hybrid model.

What incentives and support does the government offer landlords to keep rents affordable, to restrict short-term rentals? The rise in Airbnb and VBRO availability is a double edged sword. On one hand, renting out a room or part of a property may allow perspective or current homeowners to afford their home. On the other hand, there may be a large number of properties that are available year-round for short term renting. Because the needs and numbers vary county to county, it would behoove each municipality to consider airbnb zoning regulations. I know

cities that have language about renting a room in a primary residence and limiting the number of rental days a year for a complete residence. Some charge taxes for each overnight stay, or require special permits to rent out homes. It would be preposterous to think that these suggestions would provide the \$82 million dollars you predict the new tax will provide; however, it is a crucial consideration when investigating how much of current housing is available to Nova Scotia residents, as well as how to ensure some exiting housing could become available to full time residents.

The needs of Queens County differs from those of other counties. Some communities have large, loyal seasonal residents. The amount of money spent on house upkeep, landscaping, boat care and storage, cultural events and non-profit support, not to mention local eateries and shops, is significant. Have you considered the needs of towns where some businesses have very different hours or availability depending on the season? These communities would not benefit from the proposed taxes. This is not to say affordable housing might not be needed, but this broad-stroke tax plan not the solution.

I have seem many letters expressing personal anguish of family members who wish to return to Nova Scotia someday who will be unable to under this plan; from seasonal people who have come to Nova Scotia for generations and contribute to the arts, the sailing, the fabric of community life; and from full time residents who fear the impact of the tax burdens on their businesses and families. I hope you are reading them and taking their words into consideration. I was planing to retire half the year in Nova Scotia. As a US citizen there is a limit to how long I can stay in Canada. With these new taxes, I know there are many people who will not be in Nova Scotia, spending money there for half the year.

I live near Boston, Massachusetts. A highlight of my non-Nova Scotia time each year is the lighting of the Christmas Tree on Boston Common the first Thursday of December. It is a special tradition that speaks of the strong relationship between my home state and adopted province. The crowd is full of people with Nova Scotia ties and pride. It is a special gathering for many. If these taxes pass, any acknowledgement of the ties between Boston and Nova Scotia and how welcome those of us in the crowd are will be hollow words from a politician who risked so much for what is right now \$82 million of uncertainty and lack of housing.

Available and affordable housing is a critical need. How to address this issue is far more complex than the current tax proposal can resolve. I urge you to take the time to create a more comprehensive approach that does not target one specific population, and is not weighted by so much uncertainty in terms of return.

Sincerely,

Gillian Polk