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From: Jeff Somerville [REDACTED]
Sent: April 13, 2022 10:58 AM
To: Premier; Finance Minister; barkhousemla@gmail.com; Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Non-Resident Property Tax Proposal

**** EXTERNAL EMAIL / COURRIEL EXTERNE ****

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Dear Premier Houston, Minister MacMaster, Members of the Law Amendments Committee, and MLA Barkhouse

We write expressing concern about the proposed new non-resident property tax bill.

We are residents of Chester Basin. In 1992 we were transferred to Nova Scotia with our work. We lived and worked in Nova Scotia for 10 years. While Angie's family was originally from St. Joseph-du-Moine in Cape Breton this was our first time residing in a different province like so many have. We bought a piece of land on the South Shore and on transfer to Toronto in 1999 we moved back to Nova Scotia. We knew we would return some day to live out our lives in this beautiful, welcoming province. We just weren't sure when.

As it turns out we did return to permanent resident status in 2000. Since then we have been active members of the community in various sectors in both Halifax/Dartmouth and Lunenburg County. We have never regretted our decision to move back to Nova Scotia until now.

This new proposed tax is not in keeping with the friendly, welcoming and caring nature of Nova Scotia that we have come to love. It is discriminatory, mean spirited tax grab targeting people who do not have a vote and hence do not matter in the political process. We will be looking at for self justification of this tax burden. Had we not decided that earlier was better than later we would have been caught by this tax grab as well.

The intended outcomes of this bill, to raise funds to assist with an affordable housing crisis particularly in the rural areas where the rental of off-season vacant properties is admirable, but will be far outweighed by the bill's unintended consequences. It will be difficult to sell. Not all can afford or are willing to pay a 300 to 400 percent increase in property taxes. The vast majority of Nova Scotia, not in the urban centres where the real housing crisis is most apparent. This will have the effect of driving people out of the province (perhaps intended?) and a significant drop in property tax revenues for many rural Nova Scotia communities. The revenues that are brought to these rural communities, and all Nova Scotia, will be lost by the various industries that rely on rural residents. Future investments and job losses will be impacted. Many of those being punished by this tax have lived in Nova Scotia. They have family and friends in our province. They are some of our greatest ambassadors, encouraging others to come here and their friends to visit and experience the same wonderful geography, culture and friendliness we are known for.

Our hope is that a more measured approach will be taken. We have no difficulty with the proposed special tax on off-season properties even be a bit higher as a one time tax. However the imposition of a punishing 2% tax on assessed property value that is 4 times than any other jurisdiction has attempted, the consequences of which we believe have not been fully considered. Our estimations that have been made indicate that the tax will raise almost three times as much as is estimated to be needed for the affordable housing file. The vision that it will seemingly create additional housing stock through off season rental is unrealistic. We would hope that further analysis be undertaken and if the property tax idea were to proceed a more reasonable approach would not have the same level of negative results attached to it.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff and Angie Somerville

 Chester Basin.



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