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From: Steve Acker [REDACTED]
Sent: April 14, 2022 4:06 AM
To: Premier; Finance Minister; Office of the Legislative Counsel; barkhousemla@gmail.com; letters@herald.ca
Subject: Bill No 149

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After much deliberation and consternation, I have decided to add my voice to those opposing proposed Bill No 149, the "Come From Away Tax" ("CFA"). I was raised and educated in Nova Scotia, graduating with two university degrees from a Nova Scotia university. I left Nova Scotia in 1981 because I could not find gainful employment in my chosen field. I married a local girl, moved west, raised two beautiful daughters, and never forgot where I came from. In the 41 years I have "been away", I have returned annually to Nova Scotia, sometimes several times per year ... it is home. My parents, both Maritimers, longed for a "recreational" property, somewhere where they could "escape" the big city, eventually building a small place in Western Shore, Nova Scotia, a "hard scrabble" village on the South Shore. It was my father's dream spot. I have returned to this property many, many times, bringing my wife, and eventually, my daughters. My father passed away in 2006, imploring me to keep the "cottage" in the family. My mother, now 90 years old, has kept the place all these years, and has left me the property in her will. As long as she is alive, this ill conceived Come From Away Tax is moot, however, upon her passing, I will inherit this property, and now, also, a tax intended to make residential properties more accessible to "native" Nova Scotians.

It has always been my intention to retain ownership of this property, instilling in my daughters a sense of awareness and pride in what made their grandparents "tick", and where they came from. My grandfather managed the Bill Lynch Fair, and my mother spent a summer or two living on McNabb's Island, with Mrs. Lynch, while the fair travelled the Maritimes. How more "local" can our family be? This CFA Tax seems to be predicated on assuming this desire on my part to retain a tie to my family's history is in some way detrimental to the prosperous development of the Nova Scotian economy; how short sighted. When I return to Nova Scotia every year, some times for months at a time, I spend my "after tax" money, earned and taxed in another province, purchasing local goods and services. My discretionary, recreational expenses, are spent locally, all the while consuming absolutely nothing of government services available to "full time" residents.

I have spent the last 40 plus years working in the Western Canadian energy industry, and have constantly had to defend Nova Scotia to westerners who see our Province as a have not, give me more, I deserve it, poor relation ... this CFA tax does nothing but reinforce that perception. If we cannot continue to make our Province a must see, must investigate, must live there destination, then what have we left, but an insular, inward looking, stay away, we don't want you, "isolated" backwater. I am not willing to accept that perception.

The affordable housing crisis is real in Nova Scotia, as it is throughout our country, but taxing and penalizing those who have come to realize the attraction of our Province, and its way of life, as a way of addressing that problem is not only short sighted, but just plain wrong. We should be doing everything possible to attract more "visitors" to our beautiful piece of the world, not chase them away. Perhaps a minimum residency period in order to avoid the CFA tax, or a documented minimum annual spend in the Province. I, for one, spend more annually in Nova Scotia than the future CFA tax on my family's property would generate, and if I sell, will the next "local" owner spend as much? Your guess is as good as mine, but my expenditure is guaranteed.

I ask only that the Government delay passing this bill until a full and thorough debate has happened, where ALL concerned parties are able to express their opinions ... that is what I assumed democratically elected governments were "supposed" to do ...was I wrong?

Stephen Acker

