

The Honourable Tim Houston
M.L.A., Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia

Dear Premier:

I ask you to reconsider your approach to the non-resident property tax.

My wife and I have been coming to Nova Scotia for 12 years. We love Nova Scotia and are part way through a 5 year plan to move here from Ontario. We purchased vacant land here 2 years ago and we are building a house 30 minutes outside Lunenburg. Like many others, we are not speculators and are in this for the long haul. That vacant land and our new house do not represent a credible solution to the housing crisis. They do represent hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages to excavators, foundation contractors, carpenters, plumbers, engineers and surveyors to name a few and many thousands more in materials purchased from local suppliers like Nova Scotia Building Supplies, Kent and Turner Lumber. The provincial share of HST on our project alone will exceed \$65,000.

We have an apartment in Toronto out of necessity. My job remains in Ontario in the film industry. An industry here in Nova Scotia that was gutted by the summary capricious moves of a previous government. As you are now trying to regain the trust of the film industry and rebuild it please consider the long term effects of disproportionate actions like the non-resident tax.

We are in favour of moves to eliminate housing speculation and increase housing stocks. Our home is in an area where there are many second homes. In this community I have met many people who have a ready come from away or are in the process, none have bought here with the intention of making a quick profit and moving on. With only a few exceptions the homes here have been built or renovated and are too distant to represent a real solution to the housing crisis. They have a invested in "bricks and mortar" and spend significant money not only on the homes but on the local services

This suggests a punitive. Moreover, the premise is that those with second homes can easily absorb the increased expense. If this were the case it should apply equally to Nova Scotians with second properties. It's unlikely that people who have made long term investments in these homes are going to see them as a result of the tax in the short term. What I've heard from people in our community is that they will be much less likely to make improvements to the properties and that they will have less money to spend with local businesses. Businesses that are often a ready highly seasonal and battered by Covid. In the long term this will harm local businesses. The move may also result in more short term seasonal rentals to offset the increased operating expense thereby guaranteeing that in our area no new housing stock will come on to the market. I also think that the unequal nature of the tax needs to be considered in light of the long term. As long term visitors we have a ways left we come here and saw this as a place to invest in - some of that confidence has been eroded. As non-residents we do not have a voice in government now and so represent an easy target. That will sow the seeds of frustration deep.

This tax is a sledge hammer.

We want to see and end to housing speculation and credible solutions to the housing crisis.

Please tune the tax to consider the property location relative to areas where there are housing shortages and speculation is rampant, the type of property, new versus existing and the duration of ownership. Create a mechanism to eliminate short term speculation not punish those of us who have invested here for the long term.

Best regards,
Robert Emery

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Cc.

Hon. Allan McMaster, Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Treasury
Hon. John Lahr, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Susan Corkum-Greek, Minister of Economic Development