

[REDACTED]

From: MacDonald, Heather M
Sent: April 14, 2022 12:13 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: FW: Comments on Bill 149 Financial Measures (2022) Act

From: Hebb, Gordon <Gordon.Hebb@novascotia.ca>
Sent: April 14, 2022 12:05 PM
To: MacDonald, Heather M <Heather.M.MacDonald@novascotia.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Comments on Bill 149 Financial Measures (2022) Act

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Erkkila [REDACTED]
Date: April 14, 2022 at 11:19:45 AM ADT
To: "Hebb, Gordon" <Gordon.Hebb@novascotia.ca>
Subject: Comments on Bill 149 Financial Measures (2022) Act

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

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My name is Margaret Erkkila. My husband and I have a house at [REDACTED] Tidnish Cross Roads, Nova Scotia [REDACTED]. I live permanently in Florida because my husband is a US citizen. Although we are permanent residents of Florida, we spend four to five months each year in Nova Scotia. I have a strong attachment to Nova Scotia. I can trace my family roots in Nova Scotia back to the 1750s. My parents, Ross and Marion Brown, were born in Amherst more than 100 years ago. Unfortunately, they had to move to Quebec in the late 1930s to make a living. Since my father was a teacher, my family could return to Amherst every summer. When he retired in 1970, they immediately moved to Nova Scotia to occupy the house that I now own at Tidnish Cross Roads.

My house is 1 and ½ stories, 1,200 square feet, has one small bathroom, no view of the water [we are two kilometers from the Strait], no garage and is very close to Highway 366 - which is busy in the summer. The current property is assessed at the ridiculously high amount of \$181,400. I know this amount is out of line with reality because Rod Gilroy, a local real estate broker, assessed the market value of our house at \$126,500 in 2020 which is \$54,900 below the current assessed value. We have appealed the assessment but have not heard anything yet. In 2021 when the assessed value was \$161,800, we paid \$1,925.42 in property taxes - which is about twice as much as a Nova Scotia resident would pay because our property value is not capped as we live in Florida.

The new proposed tax of \$2.00 per \$100 of assessment works out to \$3,628 based on the assessed value of \$181,400. We do not know what our property taxes will be for 2022 yet but if our assessment is not corrected, they will be well over \$2,000. So the sum of the two taxes will likely be about \$6,000 for our little house without a view. This amount is likely to increase every year if our assessment continues to rise. This is a preposterously excessive amount of tax to pay for our little house. It defies common sense.

We are not wealthy. We have our house because I inherited it from my parents. We employ a neighbor to look after our house and do maintenance. Every year we make expenditures to keep the house in good condition. We spend lots of money in Amherst on groceries, gasoline, and a multitude of other things required for daily life.

Along Amherst Shore, my extended family has over 30 summer homes and cottages. Every year, my relatives come from western Canada, Ontario, Quebec, California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Connecticut, Virginia, Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, and Florida. We have all bonded to Nova Scotia and it is this bond that brings us together. Because we are so spread out geographically, our summer bond is the only way that we get to see each other. Most of my relatives are not wealthy. They provide for their summer residences in Nova Scotia by making financial sacrifices in other areas.

Don't you think it is a wonderful feature of Nova Scotia that it provides a place to bring people together from all over Canada and the USA? It facilitates international understanding. It is not on the grand scale of Cyrus Eaton's Thinkers Conference, but it is important nonetheless for international interchange and fosters goodwill. Many of us bring friends who have never been to Nova Scotia before or they visit us while we are there. They spend a lot of money too and tend to return year-after-year because of the warmth they feel from the natural Nova Scotia friendliness.

Some of my relatives are only in Nova Scotia for a week or two because they must work. They look forward to the day when they retire and can spend more time in Nova Scotia. For some, I fear that that day may never come. This new tax may make coming to Nova Scotia unaffordable for some of them. They may have to sell their Nova Scotia residences which would make me very sad. All those who promote Nova Scotia should be sad too.

--This new tax policy is really wrong headed. Short-term it may generate lots of dollars for the provincial treasury. But long-term, will it lower the number of non-residents to the point that many of the thousands of dollars these visitors spend every summer will disappear? And those dollars employ Nova Scotians directly, not make them rely on government support. Is it the policy of the Government of Nova Scotia to limit non-residential living to only the wealthy? In addition, does the Government realize that this policy will be a barrier to families getting together for the summer? Consequently, I urge you to do everything you can to stop this new tax.

Yours truly

Margie and John Erkkila

John and Margie Erkkila

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Ocala, FL
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