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From: suzanne mckay [REDACTED]
Sent: April 14, 2022 1:36 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Exempt current summer cottage owners

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

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Mr. Chairman, Law Amendments Committee:

I have just learned, literally five minutes ago, that the government's financial measures act is going through law amendments today. Am I right in thinking this is the bill which would so drastically raise taxes on out-of-province owners of summer cottages in Nova Scotia?

If so, I urge you to exempt owners of summer cottages from this ferocious tax hike. If you cannot do that, then, at the very least, exempt current owners of summer cottages from this provision, thus making it a warning to all future out-of-province cottage buyers that they are not welcome in Nova Scotia, without punishing current owners, who have invested and continue to invest lots of money in their summer properties, and who lack a vote to respond to this confiscatory legislation.

As I am sure you have heard from so many other people, these cottage owners contribute to their local communities while they are here, pay full-year taxes even while drawing upon local services for less than half the year, and often host other tourists who visit them and Nova Scotia, during the summer months. Moreover, many of these cottages are in remote, rural locations, so the notion that driving away these out-of-province cottage owners would free up housing for N.S. residents is simply wrong. Who would want to move into an uninsulated cottage in a remote, rural location lacking job opportunities or even prospects?

The bill should, instead focus on finding housing opportunities in urban or semi-urban areas, where jobs are to be found.

There are all sorts of things the Government of Nova Scotia could do to address the housing shortage for Nova Scotians; e.g., prevent conversion of current apartments into airbnbs, build more low-cost housing or provide incentives for entrepreneurs to do so, and restrict out-of-province "property flippers". Enormous tax hikes on out-of-province summer cottage owners, many of whom are in fact Nova Scotians who want to retain some connection with their home province, will not accomplish this.

Please correct this terrible mistake before you punish such innocent victims, as well as drive the tourist industry, already hard-hit by two years of COVID, further into the ground. Protect rural economies, don't harm them. Indeed, the Minister, in interviews, has come across as saying, "We won't know if this will work until we try it." Would you accept such reasoning from the mechanic who repaired your car's brakes?

- Yours sincerely, Cliff & Suzanne McKay,

Shelburne County