

To: Mr. Allen MacMaster

14 /04/2022

15759 Central Ave.

Inverness, N.S.

B0E 1N0

From: RA Watt

[REDACTED]

Tilbury, Ont.

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Dear Mr. MacMaster:

We have just been informed that there is a proposed tax hike for Nova Scotia's non-resident cottage owners. We were completely surprised and shocked by these plans.

We are aware of the need for more housing in Nova Scotia's larger centers, however, I don't believe there is a need in areas like Amherst Shore and Cumberland Co. It would seem that your government is looking at non-resident cottage owners as some sort of "cash cow". This is blatantly unfair. If owning a cottage in Nova Scotia is considered a luxury, then all cottage owners should be treated equally. The revised tax structure should be applied to all cottage owners both resident and non-resident. If all 27,000 non-resident cottage owners were to sell their cottages tomorrow, it would not solve your housing issues around Halifax and other urban centers.

Of the cottage owners on Aggermore Point approximately one third are non-residents of Nova Scotia. All however, have a former connection with the area. Personally, our family has a 65 year history with the area. My father & brother built our family cottage in 1957. Since that time, I have stayed in the family cottage every summer. After I got married my wife & I and our children have used the family cottage until 1992.

In 1993 we built our own cottage on the lot behind my parent's old cottage and have used it every summer up to the present. Our cottage was built by local contractors and all the lumber, windows, paint, nails etc. were purchased locally. Every summer I have continued to upgrade the cottage, as when we initially moved in it was not finished on the inside. Again, all of the materials were purchased locally.

As our up grades were completed our assessment rose, unlike Nova Scotia residents whose assessment was capped. As a result, we (non-residents) pay higher taxes than our neighbours. Each year we spend between \$ 5 t 10 K for such things as groceries, gas, building supplies, grass cutting, which goes straight into the local economy.

I realize that tourism is important to Nova Scotia. We see lots of advertisements promoting NS on National TV. We are also ambassadors for the province, as we invite friends and relatives from other parts of Canada and the US to visit us at the cottage. While they are visiting we take them around to see the local sites, wineries, restaurants, festivals, theatre etc. We encourage them to visit other parts of the province and the Maritimes in general. I expect that we, through our local spending, and our visitors spending, contribute more to the local economy than individuals who visit N.S. on cruise ships and bus tours.

The cottage owners both resident and non-resident have maintained all of the infrastructure on Aggermore Point. The original road was put in by Levi Ogden (the farmer who owned the property). The cottagers have maintained the lane way with no help from the county. Similarly, the cottage owners have maintained the shoreline by adding rock to prevent shoreline erosion. The only amenity that Cumberland County has provided cottagers with, is garbage pick up, which they started less than ten years ago. We already pay more taxes to Cumberland Co. than we do to our town in Ontario.

Now that we are retired, we hoped to spend 5 – 6 months every year at Amherst Shore. On a pension it will be a struggle to keep up with the proposed taxes. There has been no consultation with non-residents, which has not given us time to prepare to make any decisions regarding our future at Amherst Shore. There are few jobs along Amherst Shore other than those supported by cottage owners.

I would like to propose a solution to the issue. That non-resident cottage owners be grand fathered in, and not required to pay the proposed increased taxes. Then if and when the cottages were sold outside of the family, the new buyers would know what their taxes would be going forward.

I hope that Nova Scotia can turn things around financially, without pitting one group who cannot vote against the rest of the residents. Your proposal of raising taxes on non-residents is not right and it will not solve your housing problems.

Rob Watt