

From: Hebb, Gordon
Sent: April 16, 2022 11:51 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: FW: New Property Tax



Gordon D. Hebb QC
Chief Legislative Counsel
House of Assembly
Halifax, Nova Scotia

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From: Lorraine Wheaton [REDACTED]
Sent: April 15, 2022 10:48 AM
To: Hebb, Gordon <Gordon.Hebb@novascotia.ca>;
mla@esmithmccrossinmla.com
Subject: New Property Tax

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From: Cora Nelson [REDACTED]
Date: April 11, 2022 at 12:16:03 PM ADT
To: mlamacmaster@bellaliant.com
Subject: New Property Tax

April 11, 2022

Dear Mr. MacMaster:

This letter is to request that you reconsider the new tax on non-residential property owners.

I, as a native Nova Scotian, and my husband have returned to Nova Scotia every summer for the past 40 years. We rented cottages until 1999, at which time an elderly neighbour decided that her days at the shore were coming to an end and she asked if we would like to buy her cottage. We said yes, of course, as this would give us a summer place of our own where we could instill in our young daughters their Nova Scotian heritage. For our first 19 years, we were able to spend only two weeks at our cottage in the summer. Now retired, we spend five lovely months in residence. Regardless of the

length of time we've been able to stay at our cottage, we've paid our rural Cumberland County property taxes in full every year. We do realize that while we pay the full annual rate, we make use of services for just the minority of each year.

It appears that the goal of the new tax is first, to increase the supply of homes and second, to reduce the cost of housing. Surely you don't believe that rural or seasonal cottages are a good supply of housing. Most cottages are not insulated and cannot be lived in for more than the warmest summer months. Are you thinking that there are employment opportunities in cottage country and therefore more housing would allow more businesses to blossom? If so, we do not believe you are correct. Instead, we cottage owners are investing in our little places, renovating them and thereby increasing the tax base in many counties where population drain and abandoned homes is more the norm. The housing crisis is clearly most critical in Halifax and in larger towns in the province.

We're generally not cynical individuals, but we do have to wonder why this new tax is being imposed only on the folks who are ineligible to vote in provincial elections. Perhaps, as a representative of the people, you could suggest a way of generating funds to help with the province's housing situation and put these ideas out to your voters. You may find that residents of Nova Scotia would be in favour of reasonable proposals, even when they would have to dip into their pocketbooks, to help fellow Nova Scotians. You'd certainly know whether your fellow voting citizens thought such policies were fair and made sense as a solution to housing issues, something I think that as the peoples' representative you'd be keen to learn.

We would like to offer two suggestions.

First, as you know, many residents of Nova Scotia, often urban, own a seasonal home in the province. We suggest spreading out the opportunity to help reduce the cost of housing by including these folks, as well, for this tax. The staggering tax burden you are proposing on only non-residents would then be reduced and shared by all individuals owning a seasonal or second home. If you proposed this, you would once again be provided with the opportunity to have your constituents' feedback, through their vote.

As a second suggestion, with this new taxation law coming at non-residents out of the blue, giving us no time to scramble and adjust our household budgets to find thousands of dollars more for taxes, you could implement this new tax to come into effect on a go-forward basis only. Then, instead of imposing a tax on long-standing, tax paying non-residents, new buyers would be informed of this law and could make their purchasing decisions accordingly. Non-residents would have all of the facts and figures in front of them and then be able to make informed decisions regarding purchasing a property in Nova Scotia.

These ideas seem like possible solutions. You'll have taken on the housing crisis by providing funding, you'll not have upset and alienated long-time, tax

paying non-residents and you'll be fairly disclosing the full cost of purchasing a non-residential home in Nova Scotia.

As a final thought, please remember that we non-residents are the best ambassadors for Nova Scotia tourism. As an example, as hikers, we've invited friends to join us for the "Hike the Highlands Festival" in Cape Breton this coming September. A number of them are flying to the province from afar, renting cars, booking accommodations, eating at restaurants, enjoying the beauty of the province, and then going home full of love for our province. You might think of us as the real lifeblood of Nova Scotia's tourist industry – the boots on the ground, the spokespersons, the advocates. And, you get all of this from us for free, simply because we think so highly of our province. While we truly love our home in Nova Scotia, this new tax is a substantial financial burden and it is beginning to make us think long and hard about our future in the province. How would you feel if you were placed in this position?

Please withdraw this new taxation law. Instead, let's work together to find answers to the housing issue in meaningful ways that are fair to everyone.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Jeff and Cora Nelson