

From: Hebb, Gordon
Sent: April 19, 2022 12:51 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: FW: URGENT LETTER, April 16, 2022.
Attachments: Teri Chace to Jill Balsler etc PDF.pdf



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

(902) 424-8941

From: Teri Chace [REDACTED]
Sent: April 18, 2022 9:20 PM
To: Hebb, Gordon <Gordon.Hebb@novascotia.ca>
Subject: Fwd: URGENT LETTER, April 16, 2022.

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

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Mr. Hebb,
We protest this sudden, without-notice, unprecedented, and ill-conceived tax increase.

April 16, 2022

Hello, Jill Balsler:
cc: Tim Houston, Allan MacMaster, Editor/Chronicle-Herald, and many, many others:

I am writing about the impending tax increase on non-resident property owners, a small group of which my husband and I are a part (evidently 4% overall).

Our story, in brief: we are middle-class Americans who bought a modest house in Digby County in 2016; it had sat unsold and decaying for three years till we came along. We fixed it up and furnished it; all supplies and contractor help were paid for locally. Occasionally we rented it out (a local kindergarten teacher; contractors doing extended local-infrastructure work; a family whose own house wasn't ready to move into, etc) and plowed that money right back into the house and community. We also spent many happy times there, made what we believed would be lifelong friends, participated in beach cleanups, the community newsletter, jam sessions, contributed to community fundraisers and the food bank, etc.

Every year since we arrived, friends and family visited, made extended vacations, and spent a lot of money locally and also in places like Annapolis Royal, Yarmouth, Halifax and Cape Breton—now, however, four separate groups have canceled for this summer in the wake of the current news. Significant ripple effects in a province that relies on tourism as a major contributor to the economy.

We just want you to know the sort of ordinary, non-rich but investing, community-embracing, province-promoting people this policy is alienating and ejecting. “Canada’s Ocean Playground” will see a downturn, so unfortunate at a time when many communities are struggling to recover from the Covid shutdowns.

An aside: during the pandemic, we were legally barred from coming (despite being vaxxed to the max). When we politely appealed to our local rep about perhaps helping us to mitigate our property tax bill "even a little bit," his reply was curt. "No. Why don't you sell it?" Turns out that dismissive remark was not an anomaly and foreshadowed the current situation we are now in. We cannot picture now how we can ever feel the same about our Nova Scotia home.

Please, slow down the process here, and do some thorough scenario planning on the risks and unintended consequences. Consider, too, the differences between and unique needs of HRM versus the rural areas. A tenable cost-benefit analysis needs to be done. People like us will readily demonstrate what we already realize: there will be a net loss to the province that the new tax revenue will not begin to cover.

Certainly, less harmful, less divisive ways tacks can be determined, limiting collateral damage and unintended consequences. Can the new taxes be reduced to a more reasonable level (say, from 2% to .5%), in line with what other provinces have done? Can increases be phased in over several years? Can existing homeowners be grandfathered? *Is there a way to target and deter real-estate speculators? What about those properties that are only rented out as Airbnbs and never occupied by their actual owners?* Can you look at raising interest rates? Build more? Etc.

The housing crisis is undeniable, and a national issue, not one Nova Scotia can solve on its own. This initial stab at the problem is dishearteningly poorly thought-out and distracting the province from a genuine analysis and effective problem-solving for all.

Last but not least, and referring back to our feeling unwelcome now—this is more than a feeling, Ms. Balser. The tax is discriminatory; is this really the Nova Scotia we know and love? It discourages social/cultural and economic diversity and outside investment, which is not always or by definition bad—a risky message indeed to send to the country and the world, Nova Scotia.

“Us vs. them” leads to discord, breakdown, and bitterness, never to peace and prosperity. Please, look again.

Sincerely, and sadly,

Teri Chace

soon-to-be formerly of Freeport, Long Island, Digby County

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Teri Dunn Chace
writer * editor * consultant * speaker

Little Falls, NY
978.317.2357

terichacewriter.com

From: Hebb, Gordon
Sent: April 19, 2022 12:43 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: FW: do the math!



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

(902) 424-8941

From: Teri Chace [REDACTED]
Sent: April 19, 2022 9:18 AM
To: Hebb, Gordon <Gordon.Hebb@novascotia.ca>
Subject: do the math!

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

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Sir:

I am writing today to protest elements contained within the 2022-23 provincial budget, specifically the clauses in Bill 149 that will impose a further 2% per annum tax on non-residents who own seasonal properties here in Nova Scotia, whether purchased or passed down through generations.

Provincial interference in municipal affairs aside, I see this move as incredibly short-sighted. Since the government has framed this in terms of the economics, I will first do the same.

Non-residents who have second homes here are an economic boon to the province. They give far more than they take, paying taxes, but without normally having children requiring education in Nova Scotia schools or needing ongoing health care from the ailing Nova Scotia system, nor making fulltime use of municipal services (though they still pay for them year round). When they are here, they purchase goods and services, eat at restaurants, patronize cultural events, and invite others "from away" to come to visit our province and share in all the good things they've found here.

Some choose to operate their properties as short term rentals when they are not here, continuing the flow of tourism dollars into our communities.

All of these activities are to our benefit and spin off into the local economy, especially in rural areas where seasonal residents tend to choose to be.

There is an illusion of the wealthy come-from-away that is being used to justify this measure. And though it may be true for some, it is certainly not so for all. Many people who by choice or necessity are not permanent residents of Nova Scotia but who are Nova Scotian by choice are simply not going to be able to absorb a tax of this kind.

It will force them to leave, taking all the economic benefits of their time spent here with them.

Their properties, many of them seasonal dwellings not suitable for year-round habitation or located in areas where there are few available jobs, will flood the market in these areas.....and lower property values for the remaining permanent residents and Nova Scotian recreational property owners of the communities in which these seasonal properties are located. Lowering property values and assessments leads to less tax revenue for municipalities, entities that are already struggling especially in rural areas.

Look again, please.

PS - How ugly, to approach the province's problems by going after people who do not and cannot vote. How ugly, to divide "us" and "them," which, hello? Includes native Nova Scotians with deep historical roots in the province.

--

Teri Dunn Chace

writer * editor * consultant * speaker

[REDACTED]

Little Falls, NY 13365

[REDACTED]

terichacewriter.com