

SPEAKING TO THE LEGISLATURE : APRIL 19, 2022 9 AM (Note, I did not receive a zoom link. I spoke to someone on Thursday morning and afternoon that I had not received one. She said I was re-scheduled for this morning and to call in about 15 minutes before my turn. No zoom link received.)

My name is Monica Sontrop. I live in Chester Basin and you may call me Monica

- I am a first generation Canadian whose parents came to Canada from the Netherlands after the Second World War in 1951 to a land of opportunity. This was before social assistance. You had to work hard to get ahead but you were not penalized for doing so. Centuries ago our first settlers came here from Europe to get away from excessive taxes, rules, and serfdom, a chance for freedom.
- I have been a partner in creating and running several successful small businesses in the past including a chain of retail shops and a successful restaurant written up in Where to Eat in Canada. I have been a real estate agent on the South shore for the last 30 years.
- My husband reminded me of how we came here and if these taxes had been in place 30 years ago, we would not have moved here because it was a gradual transition and we initially bought a lake front lot a few years before we were ready to move here. Our children and grandchildren come to visit every summer and spend money while they are here.
- Part-time residents consider NS a second home, not a place to park money.
- Whoever came up with this idea has no idea of the fabric of Nova Scotia, who spends money and brings money to the province. As a CFA, I have never felt unwelcome and this tax will jeopardize our reputation for years.
- Affordable housing is not a NS phenomena. There is an affordable housing shortage across North America and even in parts of Europe.
- John Duckworth gave an excellent recap of all the points last Thursday morning of why this tax is regressive, will adversely affect our province's reputation and why it will not accomplish what you think it will. As John said, the more successful this tax is the more it will fail and the damage it will do to our tourism and reputation will take years to repair.
- This is as short sighted in my view as when the Liberal government got rid of the movie tax credit. We lost talented people, their extended families and people who gave their time and talent to our community. The dollars that bolstered especially the rural economy disappeared.
- Contrary to one of the legislative members comments on Thursday, that agents in his area are not opposed to a 5% tax, I can confirm that not one person that I have spoken to has felt the 5% tax and/or tripling property taxes for part-time residents is anything but punitive and discriminatory.
- I have read copies of numerous letters that were sent to the government as to why this is a discriminatory tax so I don't need to repeat anything in them. Many small business owners are busy working and don't have time to write letters – carpenters, painters, plumbers, electricians, lumber yard owners... Others don't realize the trickle down effect this will have on the economy – retail employees, car salesmen, furniture stores, clothing stores.
- As Nova Scotians, we receive \$2000 per person in equalization payments from the rest of Canada and now we are shutting the doors to our neighbours and extended families in other provinces? Are we one country or 12 little countries and what about our global community? The Germans years ago spent money to build homes in rural areas and contributed to our economy here. Americans have had family homes here for generations.

- Who is going to keep tourism and our restaurants alive in our rural areas?
- How is taxing vacant land for non-residents going to provide affordable housing to Nova Scotians ? How is taxing cottages in our hinterland lakes going to provide homes for Nova Scotians? At a minimum if you plan to implement this insane tax, I would recommend grandfathering existing part-time home owners that own properties as of June 1, 2022 but my recommendation is to totally scrap this tax and look at cutting a bloated government. Why do government employees get pensions over and above our Canada Pension and Old Age Pension when the majority of workers have to save in RRSPs or build up equity in their homes?
- I would suggest that rather than being worried about creating affordable housing, fixing our broken health system and trying to attract more doctors to the province, that this is easiest tax grab that someone could think of that is not going to upset Nova Scotians and will keep you in power.
- I would suggest people would consider this a success tax. People that have worked hard to scrimp and save to buy a cottage or a second home here whether to spend time with their NS families or because they love the province and feel this is their second home.
- Regarding meeting with small business and other front line business people, I would suggest that it takes courage and hard work to find real solutions. Our real estate board tried for months to set up a meeting with the government to discuss recommendations but were stone walled until March 24th when the proposed budget was already put together.
- We are a province of a million people and we are paying three levels of government. As I have stated previously in my emails to the finance minister and our MLA, we need to streamline systems, reduce red tape and cut back government overlap. 25 years ago it took 2 weeks to get a piece of land subdivided through the government. Now it takes 12 weeks in Lunenburg County and 5 months or more in Halifax County. I would be happy to speak to the powers that be about some sensible changes.
- OUR ONLY PROBLEM IS THERE IS NO INVENTORY OF HOMES. STREAMLINE REGULATIONS.