From:	Teri Chace
To:	NSFM Info
Subject:	Fwd: URGENT LETTER, April 16, 2022.
Date:	April 17, 2022 4:59:41 PM
Attachments:	Teri Chace to Jill Balser etc PDF.pdf

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From: **Teri Chace** <teri.chace@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 17, 2022 at 3:49 PM
Subject: Fwd: URGENT LETTER, April 16, 2022.
To: <lgregory@digbymun.ca>, <jsunderland@digbymun.ca>

Hello:
We hope you are aware that many of us are being forced out with this huge new tax. Gone will not only be our own spending and investment in Digby County, but that of our annual visitors--all canceled now. Little things: eating at the Crow's Nest, shopping at Wilsons; big things: our tax revenue despite low impact on services, closing our account at RBC, no more Fundy Rose tickets or tourism spending on the mainland, Neck, or Islands. Thousands of dollars annually, gone.

Thank you for reading this and your consideration. If you need more information or wish to advocate for a better way, I suppose Jill Balser is the place to start.

April 16, 2022

Hello, Jill Balser:
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,

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

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