

Grand Bay-Westfield Quispamsis Rothesay St. Martins

His Worship, Mayor Don Darling
Saint John City Hall

July 4, 2019

OPEN LETTER

Mayor Darling:

Earlier today we met as a group of neighbours to discuss how we might be able to lend our support to you, and the City as a whole, in the ongoing dialogue and debate surrounding Saint John's 'new deal' with the Province.

As your regional partners, we want to make it clear that we **support you in your call for tax reform**. To that end, in an interview with the Telegraph Journal today we publicly (and jointly) lent you our support.

We are proud of our towns and villages, but we share one city – Saint John. We are all invested in your success!

In the spirit of cooperation, we join you in calling on the Province to work with us on a solution for our region. We are anxious to read and understand the working group recommendations set to be released next week.

Among the things we're hopeful will be included are significant changes to the way Provincial property tax revenues are shared between the Province and municipalities. As it stands, it's out-of-date and unfair. We know you agree.

In fact, taking our shared perspective one step further, we would assert that **Saint John hasn't gotten a 'new' or 'special deal'. We're talking about money that was raised in Saint John and should have stayed with the City in the first place.**

On average within the municipalities in our region, the Provincial share of the non-residential property tax is close to half. Does the province provide half of the local services? We don't think so! We think that the Province is taking far more than its fair share. Add to that the fact that Provincial property tax rates have remained unchanged since 1966, yet municipalities are expected to deliver more and more services. It's a weighty burden.

Municipalities need more tax revenue but our residents don't need to pay more taxes. The Province should transfer more of the Provincial tax it collects directly to municipalities. Or lower the Provincial non-residential rate and allow municipal governments to take up the tax room. This would better reflect the distribution of service delivery costs between provincial and municipal governments.

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Mayor, we hope our public support contributes to advancing the Provincial discussion and decision-making in our region's favour. We have added our voices to yours because we all care about this region, and recognize that the rising tide of Saint John's success will lift our boats too.

We want to work together on the big picture. Residents in the region are tired of disputes over minor irritants like ice surfaces. If we solve the big problem, these smaller issues will take care of themselves.

Respectfully yours,



Mayor B. Chatterton



Mayor G Clark



Mayor N Grant

Mayor G Losier

