

Sept 9, 2025

To: East Hants Municipality Councillors

From: Alan Shepherd & Mary-Anne Arsenault

Good day, Councillors;

We are writing today to bring to your attention the outrageously high taxes the residents of East Hants are forced to pay.

We recently moved “home” to NS to retire and decided to settle in the community of Belnan. Many people decide to move to such a community to be away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Normally, moving to a more rural community means lower property taxes to coincide with fewer services. This is not the case in East Hants. Properties with similar tax assessments in Halifax, for instance are much lower. When we purchased the property we were aware that our property taxes would be approximately \$4000. Imagine our shock when we received a tax notice for more than \$7000!

We have no public transit, a volunteer fire department (not a fully staffed fire department), no sidewalks and very few street lights. We provide our own water and septic where we just had to pay \$2500 for a new well pump. The provincial policy is to charge those with their own water & septic a lower tax rate; why should we pay the same rate as those within East Hants who are able to access municipal water and sewer?

The population of East Hants has exploded, bringing in many more tax dollars yet services have not increased. With all of these new residents, tax assessment caps coming off and many more higher-end homes being built, the municipality is enriched. We firmly believe that there should be a maximum property tax a resident should pay. For a person who owns a home worth \$200K vs a home worth \$2M – what extra services does the \$2M home owner get to justify the exorbitant property taxes paid? A cap of something around \$4000 seems fair. Just because the property values have been artificially inflated, the municipality should not be enriched and the home owners “punished”. Plus there should be an option of a payment plan for property taxes. We had already paid \$2309.03 back in May and then received another bill for \$4748.54 due the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, under threat of 12% interest if we don’t pay by that date. Few people have that kind of cash sitting around.

We have neighbours with homes valued at over \$1M who are paying \$4700, Our home is tax assessed at \$683K. Paying \$7000 in property tax is ridiculous. Paying this high of a tax is a deterrent to people moving to the community. It will also make it difficult for people to sell their properties.

We have no problem paying our fair share of taxes. But this is unfair. We have no public transit, no water or sewer, etc. We expected to have fewer services as we now live in a rural community. What we didn't expect is to have to pay a higher property tax than those in the province with all the services.

We would like to see a cap on the maximum tax amount any resident shall pay as well as a lesser percentage for those properties with their own well and septic, as outlined in provincial policy. This is completely within the control of the municipality.

Sincerely,

Alan Shepherd

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mary-Anne Arsenault

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a stylized 'M' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke.