

MuniLegislativeReview

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2018 8:17 PM
To: MuniLegislativeReview
Subject: Review of the Municipalities Act

To Whom It May Concern;

I agree it is time to review the Municipalities Act. There are few things I think should be considered;

1.First of all, The Municipal Assessment Agency should be revamped. For a start, the idea of property tax based on the value of a home needs to be reviewed – does the home owner get additional services because their house is deemed to be worth more than their neighbours ? Is their snow clearing or garbage collection to a higher standard ? The way to address this issue would be to establish a budget within a town for residential property owners then divide it by the number of residential properties. When divided, every home owner in the community pays the same- how fair is that? And no more residential appeals ! This process has the added benefit of eliminating a great deal of the work the Municipal Assessment Agency does thus reducing or eliminating it entirely. Imagine, every household would pay the same amount for an equal level of service...what a novel concept! And a government agency could disappear. Bonus! Some might ask is there any precedent for this? Well, as an example, both Mt Pearl and St John’s charge a flat tax for water – regardless of the value of the property or the number of bathrooms in the house so this precedent is well established.

2. Deal with the unincorporated communities. For some reason, this government does not want to touch these communities. If the established towns in the province decided to unincorporate to avoid taxation the government would be in quite a predicament. While your website quotes roughly 100 UIC’s, the number I’ve seen is closer to double that. It’s time to adopt the county system used in provinces such as Nova Scotia and charge all home owners in the province a tax on their property. It’s time to get the Dept of Transportation out of the role of maintaining the roads in communities and back to the highways.However If a town cannot support its own infrastructure for snow clearing and road maintenance, then at least the province would recoup some of the cost back through the process of a flat tax(or poll tax , whatever you choose to call it) charged to all homeowners in the unincorporated community. This would be done through the county system and in the same way the garbage collection tax is collected now.

3.And speaking of garbage tax, lets change the idea of charging people a garbage collection tax in rural areas (even though this is not your mandate just bear with me). If we now charge people living full time in an unincorporated areas a flat tax , say \$750 a year for example, why not do the same thing for cabin owners? – by definition it is a property and if the garbage tax was a portion of it, people might accept it easier. If every property owner in the province pays a tax, then it is difficult for anyone to claim to be hard done by! After all, while some cabins might be accessed on unserviced roads, the highway they took to get there needs to be maintained. If we had a county system, it would be easier to capture all home owners and cabin owners and tax each as separate properties. There could be a limit on a seasonal property of \$500 per year as a guestimate but at least all property owners would be taxed and the thinly veiled garbage collection fees that are nothing more than a tax grab would blend in with the property tax.

Thank you for considering my suggestions.If you need

to contact me I can be reached at



Chris Hogan