

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

I am writing to express the Chamber's concern regarding the proposal last evening by Councillor Russell Walker, to rescind the December 16th 2008 motion concerning the Transit service based tax. As you know, specifically, the December 16th motion read:

MOVED BY Councillor Johns, seconded by Deputy Mayor Hendsbee that Halifax Regional Council approve in principle:

1. Metro Link, Rural Express Transit and Ferries should be paid for largely by an area rate on dwelling units in the Urban Settlement and the Rural Commuter Shed designations; and,

2. Local Transit routes should be funded by a single area rate on dwelling units paid by all properties within walking distance of transit service and that the Draft 2009 - 2010 Budget should be developed upon this basis; and that staff return to Council with the proposed tax rates and service changes.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Chamber is concerned that if the December 16th motion is rescinded, Council will move farther away from the overall purpose of the Tax Reform initiative, which is to move towards service based taxes.

As stated by Mr. Bruce Fisher at Committee of the Whole on December 9th, 2008:

- the current tax structure for transit is hindering the expansion of transit;
- it is the urban taxpayers who are essentially paying for transit, yet about 5,000 urban taxpayers are more than 1 kilometre from a transit stop and pay for transit; nearly 2,000 suburban and rural taxpayers are within 1 kilometre of a transit stop and do not pay for transit.

We ask that Council not hinder progress. Move forward and vote no next week on rescinding the motion of December 16th 2008 and vote yes to the future and much needed tax reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Payn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Valerie A. Payn
President