

March 16, 2016

Honorable Zach Churchill
Department of Municipal Affairs
1505 Barrington Street, 14th Floor
P.O. Box 216
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2M4

Dear Minister Churchill,

I would like to express the Halifax Chamber of Commerce's full support for Halifax Regional Council's recent request for greater flexibility in designing its tax system. Tax reform is a major priority of the Halifax Chamber and it is clear that reforming Halifax's property tax system cannot be done without legislative changes at the provincial level. Amending the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* will clarify what reforms are possible and will make it significantly easier for council to consider the costs and benefits of the various alternatives.

Passing the necessary amendments in this upcoming provincial legislative session will permit a full debate of the issues in October's municipal election and will allow for changes to be enacted by council in time for the next municipal budget cycle leading into the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Many of our members consider commercial tax reform to be a matter of urgent importance and are looking for action as soon as possible.

Reducing the tax burden is a key issue for the Chamber under our 2013-2018 Strategic Plan and we encourage you to act positively on Halifax Regional Council's request "to provide Council with greater legislative authority in setting taxes and charges". If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to let me know.

Respectfully Yours,



Valerie Payn, President and CEO
Halifax Chamber of Commerce