



Norm Verbrugge
President, VRBA

The Other Price of the Speculation Tax

The BC government is expanding the Speculation Tax into North Cowichan, Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan, Lions Bay and Squamish.

The province already generates \$3 billion a year by charging an average \$16,000 in Property Transfer Tax for a land title transfer costing \$500 in Alberta.

The Speculation Tax revenue is more than \$200 million but it's never enough.

The government claimed the tax was to improve housing, however BC home prices and rents continued rising, while supply declined in the most expensive province in Canada.

Cottage owners in specified regions, including areas like Lake Cowichan and West Kelowna, will be required to pay the government thousands of dollars in taxes annually or sell.

Newly married couples each owning a condo unit will be required to either annually pay the BC government or sell one of the units – even if their stratas don't permit rentals.

The government claims this is all about creating housing. Except their report says almost half of the fewer tax exemptions were vacant properties with no homes. The government ended the exemptions.

Also ended is the exemption for condo units which cannot be rented due to strata rules.

In these cases, the only units available to the public are those where British Columbians are forced to sell their private property.

Either way, the government will get its cash in Speculation Tax or Property Transfer Tax.

Housing supply is a critical issue and BC could address it without violating the property rights of BC residents.

For example, Nova Scotia is empowering the Housing Minister to approve development permits in regions obstructing housing.

This sends a message to local authorities to do better.

However, the BC government has chosen the path of eroding individual privacy and property rights of British Columbians.

While the financial cost to these BC residents is significant, the other price being paid is loss of freedom of choice and property ownership for ourselves and future generations.

There are more effective and far preferable options to housing affordability than BC's costly and ever-expanding Speculation Tax.



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