

Reduce property tax to encourage density

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If we must tax, at least it should be equitable and perform some social or economic objective and not deter economic development.

One step that would encourage densification is to amend the provincial property purchase tax regimes across Canada to stimulate the construction of medium and high-density housing.

This proposal would partially offset the impact of the harmonized sales tax impact in making home purchases less affordable while offering health, social, environmental and economic development benefits.

Many Canadian cities have been rendered inefficient by urban sprawl. We need better integration of mass transit and urban planning. We need to tailor housing and commercial forms toward mid-to-high density development. Urban sprawl brings increased personal expense, wasted time and substantial negative impact on the natural environment. The health benefits of densification include more physical activity as

people walk or use transit in compact communities.

Most provinces have such a tax, ranging up to two per cent, with certain exemptions. I propose additional exemptions or reductions based on density and the promotion of public transit use. More specifically, the higher the density of the housing (based either on zoning or census definitions), the lower the property purchase tax rate. There could also be a tax rate reduction for a home purchase within a half-kilometre of rapid transit.

Young families would be better positioned to get into the market, while at the same time moving into environmentally friendly living (larger condominiums, row houses, brownstones or townhouses rather than single-family dwellings). For instance, a one per cent tax difference on a \$400,000 townhouse is a \$4,000 upfront cost for a young family.

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People leaving their mark on atmosphere

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Re: Environmentalism another type of dogma, July 31, 2009.

Robert Nicholas has a good point comparing the enviros with the gospel readers.

None of the following books have been around anywhere near as long as the Bible, but I do query whether he has read any of them: *The Party's Over* by Richard Heinberg, *Collapse* by Jared Diamond, *The Weather Makers* by Tim Flannery or *The Geography of Hope* by Chris Turner.

In *The Pioneer Years 1895-1914* by Barry Broadfoot, page 109 starts: "The atmosphere then was much clearer than it is now, and you could stand on a little rise and look way off, far away into the distance ..." Other chapters mention the same thing.

With our present heat wave and the smog over Victoria, from our home we can see that the sun doesn't rise on the horizon but above the smog.

Since 1909, man-made carbon emissions have changed the atmosphere. Even with the Pacific Ocean on our shore and no real industry, the inefficient internal combustion engine leaves its mark.

We don't have to live with this. For a start, electric rail transit will do clean-up wonders as, increasingly, cities around the world are beginning to realize.

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