



MEDIA RELEASE

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Central Okanagan Business Organizations Applaud Local Mayors In Pushing Back on Spec Tax

Kelowna: Both the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Westside Board of Trade were on hand Wednesday during the UBCM in Whistler to support local government leaders from across the province in pushing back against the proposed Speculation Tax at a media event called to coincide with the Union of BC Municipalities annual convention. Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran took the stage alongside Mayor Doug Findlater of West Kelowna. Multiple elected officials highlighted the economic damage the spectre of the tax has already caused in their communities, chasing away tourists, construction projects and negatively impacting local businesses both in tax-targeted and non-targeted areas.

A number of BC chambers of commerce attended the event. Carmen Sparg, President of the Kelowna Chamber said, "We thank mayors throughout the Valley for fighting this anti-Canadian tax. We believe the way this tax has been introduced, with no prior consultation with local government, runs contrary to the principle of respect for local government as 'An order of Government' as entrenched in BC's Community Charter."

Bobby Gidda, Chair of the Greater Westside Board of Trade, echoed that sentiment. "We are asking for immediate consultation by the Province with community leaders and local government," said Gidda. "We know that West Kelowna has been inundated with calls, letters and emails on the issue, and we, too, have heard from members and business leaders who are concerned about the direct and indirect economic impact of the proposed tax. West Kelowna has already felt its harmful economic effects and we're very supportive of Mayor Findlater's ongoing attempts to get the Province to put the brakes on this proposed tax."

The Kelowna Chamber and the Greater Westside Board of Trade are both founding members of the "Scrap the Speculation Tax" coalition. The Kelowna Chamber tabled a resolution at the 2018 BC Chamber Policy Session, which was unanimously adopted. That resolution describes the Speculation Tax as "anti-Canadian" and calls for it to be abolished. There are many people who feel the tax will do nothing to make housing more affordable to average working families.

More than 22,000 letters have been sent to the provincial government as a result of the Coalition's efforts to distribute information about the harmful effects of the proposed tax.

For more information:

Carmen Sparg, President, Kelowna Chamber 250-859-0547 carmensparg@live.com

Bobby Gidda, Chair, Greater Westside Board of Trade 250-864-0549, bobby@volcanichillswinery.com