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From: noreply@northumberlandcounty.ca <noreply@northumberlandcounty.ca> On Behalf Of john cullen
Sent: Friday, June 7, 2024 11:38 AM
To: Mather, Maddison <matherm@northumberland.ca>
Subject: Municipality of Port Hope Tax Burden

CAUTION: External E-Mail

Attached is a letter pertaining to the outrageous tax increases Rural Port Hope residents have been subjected to since rural Hope Township was amalgamated with the urban Town of Port Hope in 2001.

I am of course well aware taxes are a prime topic of complaint, but something is very wrong when annual double digit municipal tax increases are becoming so common. Our annual Rural Port Hope Tax Bill (County/Municipal/Education) now equals 50% of my gross company retirement, and the main reason is because of our excessive municipal taxes, as I've explained in my attached letter which I've also copyied to the Northumberland County CAO, MPP David Piccini, and Port Hope Council.

Forcing a small rural township to amalgamate with an urban town nearly 3 times larger was a colossal error in judgment by the Province in 2001. Hope Township should have been paired with an adjacent rural municipality!

Somewhere gathering dust on a shelf at the MMAH is a petition signed by 82% of the adult residents of Hope Township in 2013, requesting the Municipality of Port Hope do what Ontario should have done prior to the 2001 amalgamation.

I still have a PDF copy of all 143 signed pages of that petition; 82Mb I can gladly provide on a CD or USB stick if you would like a copy.

I sincerely hope Northumberland County is willing and able can help rectify our situation.
Rural Port Hope ratepayers cannot survive much longer under Port Hope's administration.

If you would kindly forward this note and the attached letter to all members of Northumberland County Council it would be very much appreciated. Thank you.

Our final 2024 Tax Bill with yet another double digit tax increase confirms the Municipality of Port Hope has lost all sense of reality and continues to illustrate this municipality is either unwilling or incapable of operating a municipal government with any sense of fiscal responsibility.

The following data pertains to the Municipal and County components of my personal "Rural Port Hope" (Hope Township) tax bills. It does not include the Education component, nor does it include any additional (and unknown) monies withdrawn by this municipality each year from our former \$10M Hope Township LLRW Trust Fund.

Frequent annual double digit municipal tax increases are indicative of a municipality incapable of differentiating between wants and needs, blissfully spending more and raising taxes each year rather than living within their means like every family must do. Rural ratepayers do not have infinitely deep pockets for continually escalating municipal tax increases!

Port Hope is often described as a retirement community, and many retirees are on fixed incomes. For over 20 years my annual retirement income has NEVER increased by double digits, yet my municipal taxes have increased by double digits **5** times since 2016, even reaching a whopping **19.7%** increase in tax year 2018.

Since 2016 my Municipal tax increases have exceeded the Stats Canada Consumer Price Index every year, by as much as 10 times the rate of inflation in 2018.

In the other 5 years since 2016 my annual municipal tax increases ranged from a low of 5.5% (2021) to a high of 9.1% (2020).

My Average Annual municipal tax increase between 2016 and 2024 works out to **11.0%**. Who else can demand and receive an 11.0% increase in their income every year, apart from a municipality?

The chances of a young family ever owning a home today are next to nil when excessive municipal property taxes are added to an already unaffordable mortgage payment, but they've been advised they won't own anything by 2030 and will be happy.

And now it seems retirees are being targeted to shift to the 2030 happy life by taxing us out of the homes we built and paid for years ago when raising our families.

Comparing the fiscal performance of our Municipality with Northumberland County for the same period from 2016 to 2024:

In the **9** years from **2016 to 2024**:

- There were **5** double digit **Municipal** tax increases. The highest being **19.7%** in 2018,
- There were **0** double digit **County** tax increases. The highest being **7.4%** in 2017.
- The average Annual **Municipal** tax increase was **11%**
- The average Annual **County** tax increase was **5.0%**
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To put it in even greater perspective, since 2003 my:

- Municipal taxes increased **280%**
- County taxes increased **150%**.

If for example a ratepayer was paying \$800 for municipal taxes in 2003:

- A 100% increase means their taxes are 2X as much, so they're now paying \$1600 (Doubled)
- A 200% increase means their taxes are 3X as much, so they're now paying \$2400 (Tripled)
- A 300% increase means their taxes are 4X as much, so they're now paying \$3200 (Quadrupled)

So it would seem obvious which level of government is exercising greater fiscal responsibility when municipal taxes have increased nearly twice as much as county taxes.

Why would any new business or family choose to relocate in Port Hope when double digit municipal tax increases have become so common over the past 9 years?

Are the other 6 municipalities in Northumberland County experiencing tax increases as punishing as ours, or is there a more obvious reason why Port Hope's Rural ratepayers are more vulnerable?

Hope Township was a small but solvent **Rural** community before 01Jan2001 when we became a minority Rural player in the most heavily **Urban** skewed municipality in Northumberland County, with a **75/25** urban/rural population ratio. Rural residents were never offered the courtesy of their opinion before the merger.

Organized efforts to reverse and rethink the unfairness of the amalgamation have fallen on deaf ears, so we're obliged to contend with shamefully obscene tax hikes in perpetuity for something we never asked for.

Northumberland County (2021 pop. 89,365) falls under the definition of Rural Ontario, an upper tier municipality containing 7 lower tier municipalities, with each lower tier municipality electing their own council and employing their own municipal staff. The 7 lower tier municipalities include 43 elected representatives (7 Mayors and 36 Councilors).

As of 2016, approximately 53% of the County's population lies within an Urban Area, providing a more equitable balance in Urban/Rural representation.

If Northumberland County can continue to demonstrate they are a better manager of our taxes then it would seem appropriate for the County to form an unbiased committee to study the advantages and disadvantages of transitioning Northumberland County to a single-tier municipality.

The former lower-tier municipal governments would be replaced by elected representatives based on population, (perhaps in a manner similar to Northumberland County Weighted Vote By-law 44-2022) to serve on County Council.

In summary, this municipality's tax record over the past 23 years clearly shows no hope of ever achieving fairness or fiscal responsibility for Rural residents, therefore **we are appealing to Northumberland County and the Province of Ontario for their aid in resolving this issue.**

No other issue should take precedence over people being taxed out of their homes!

John & Joy Cullen

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]