

## Political Speak - HST hike will hurt NS families, businesses

By Kelly Regan, MLA for Bedford-Birch Cove

I hope you're enjoying the start of the summer vacation season and that you have had a chance to take in some of the celebrations over the past two weeks -Mawio'mi (Membertou 400), the 100th anniversary of Canada's Navy, and the Queen's visit. I'd like to thank the many volunteers who worked to make our celebratory events throughout our region such a success.

For many of us, the start of summer is signalled by the arrival of Canada Day. Unfortunately, this year Canada Day signalled the start of another "event" - the increase of the Harmonized Sales Tax. The NDP government has increased the tax by 2 percent, from 13 to 15%, and it did so even though they campaigned just over a year ago on not raising taxes.

Significantly, the NDP decided to increase the HST without studying its effect on Nova Scotian businesses or families.

So today, Nova Scotia now has the highest consumption tax in the country.

This increased tax makes it very difficult for our businesses to compete with New Brunswick, where taxes are lower. It makes life harder still for border communities to convince their residents to shop here in Nova Scotia.

This increased tax makes it very difficult for small businesses to weather the continuing downturn in the economy. Business owners know consumers will shy away from optional purchases now that they have to pay an additional 2% tax -- and they'll buy less expensive necessities.

This increased tax makes life very difficult for families to pull themselves out of debt, when they are being nicked and dimed on nearly every single purchase they make. Two percent may not seem like a lot - until you add up all your purchases.

And don't think this HST hike will be the only ways the tax increase will affect your pocketbook. Our health care providers are being hit with this tax, too, as are our school boards. Because they're faced with increased costs, they're going to have to find a way to pay for them; expect to see cuts and/or reduced service as a result.

Don't forget: our municipalities are being hit with this tax increase as well. Everything HRM does is going to be impacted by this increase; that means in the year ahead your municipal taxes will go up, or your service will go down.

To give credit where it's due, the NDP did remove the HST from some items - like children's clothing and women's sanitary products, for example. But this small amount of relief completely is far outweighed by the damage an increase in a consumption tax will have on our economy. A "better deal" for your family? You decide.

Finally, my constituency office is located in Suite 555 - 1550 Bedford Highway. For assistance, please contact me at [kelly@kellyregan.ca](mailto:kelly@kellyregan.ca) or by phone at 407-3777.

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