

March 8, 2023



Honourable Pat Dunn
Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
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Dear Minister Dunn,

On behalf of the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS), we are writing to express our strong support for Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia's (HTNS) submission to enhance the protection of built heritage in Nova Scotia.

This is an extremely important issue that needs attention and presents a compelling legacy opportunity for your government.

Nova Scotia has incredible natural, cultural and historical assets, and our collective built heritage is a crucial part of the Nova Scotia story and brand. We are seeing the destruction of a number of heritage properties happening at an alarming rate and we firmly believe there is a need for immediate change to the Nova Scotia Heritage Act.

While there are several excellent recommendations in Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia's submission, we call upon the provincial government to advance changes to the Heritage Act including removing Section 18 of the Act, which currently allows owners of municipally registered heritage buildings to demolish them after a three-year waiting period, a provision that exists nowhere else in Canada.

We believe this is the first step and will be key to building a modern legislative system that ensures protection and awareness of the value of our built heritage. We further support all of the recommendations put forth by the HTNS (attached).

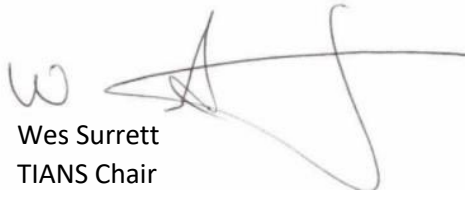
From a tourism perspective, heritage and culture impact the quality of communities for Nova Scotia residents and are significant travel motivators for visitors. Nova Scotia has a distinct and competitive advantage, if we ensure the protection of our historical and cultural assets, and leverage these as a medium to tell our story as a destination.

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Minister Dunn
March 6, 2023
Page 2

We appreciate your consideration and urge action on this important file. We believe that demonstrating leadership on this issue will resonate with the majority of Nova Scotians and support building pride of place.

Sincerely,



Wes Surratt
TIANS Chair



Darlene Grant Fiander
TIANS President

cc TIANS Board
Nova Scotia Heritage Trust

Attachment (1)

Excerpt from February 20, 2023 Submission by
Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

1. Update and strengthen the Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act by:
 - a) removing Section 18 of the Act, which currently allows owners of municipally registered heritage buildings to demolish them after a three-year waiting period, a provision that exists nowhere else in Canada;
 - b) creating a pause provision of up to one year for specific types of development while conservation plans and bylaws are prepared for Heritage Conservation Districts or Cultural Landscape Conservation Districts;
 - c) creating a 30-day holding bylaw for potential heritage assets to protect them from demolition while applications for heritage designation are being considered;
 - d) increasing and enforcing fines for illegal demolition of designated heritage properties.
2. Enable municipalities to give preferential property tax treatment to owners of heritage buildings.
3. Enable municipalities to require residential property owners to have building permits in place before they are granted permission to demolish existing residential units.
4. Enable municipalities to increase tax rates for vacant properties where owners have demolished existing residential units without an approved plan for development.
5. Increase financial and regulatory incentives that encourage the restoration and adaptive reuse of heritage properties.
6. Initiate a heritage tourism product development and marketing strategy.