

***UBC Neighbourhoods
Taxation Working Group***

4-5650 Hampton Place
Vancouver, BC, V6T 2G5
william.holmes@telus.net
604.224.1701

June 5, 2016

By Email (CSCD.minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Peter Fassbender
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
PO Box 9056 Stn Prov Govt.
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister:

UBC Neighbourhoods—Fire Service Charge

We are writing regarding the decision of your Ministry to impose a fire service charge on property owners in the UBC neighbourhoods. We submit that the charge is inequitable. In place of the charge, a portion of our general rural property tax should be applied to pay our share of the cost of fire protection service. We urge your Ministry to work with the Ministry of Finance to bring about this result.

This is an extremely important issue for our community. Because of the unusual way in which revenue is raised to fund community expenses, the fire service charge will inflict substantial financial hardship on the community and could even throw the financial viability of the community into question.

Your Ministry's decision to impose the charge was based on a misunderstanding of taxation in our neighbouring community, the University Endowment Lands. Because of that misunderstanding, a faulty comparison was made of the amount of taxes payable by the two communities. A proper analysis shows that we are already unfairly taxed compared to the UEL. The fire service charge will exacerbate the unfairness. Furthermore, the decision did not take into account that the only benefit UBC taxpayers appear to receive from the provincial government in return for general rural tax is fire protection service.

This is all explained in detail in our letter of May 23rd to your colleague, the Minister of Finance (see, in particular, the attachment to the letter). You were copied on that letter, which we include again with this letter.

In our view, the issue is one between Ministries. The Ministry of Finance collects general rural property tax from UBC taxpayers while your Ministry provides fire protection service for the UBC/UEL area through its Fire Services Agreement with the City of Vancouver. The tax needs to be matched up with the cost of the service.

We look forward to confirmation that your Ministry will take up this important matter with the Finance Ministry. If we have not convinced you to do so, then we would like to request a meeting with you to discuss the fire service charge further.

Yours sincerely,



William Holmes



George Mackie



Ying Zhou

cc: The Honourable Michael de Jong, Q.C., Minister of Finance
David Eby, MLA, Vancouver-Point Grey
Richard Alexander, Chair and President, University Neighbourhoods Association
Michael White, Associate Vice President, Campus and Community Planning, UBC