

Port Moody, BC, Canada. For immediate release.

January 2, 2008

Canadians celebrate Tax Freedom Day, 14 January 2008. Oops... sorry... that's only city taxes.

What is it? Tax Freedom Day is that glorious day each year when Canadian taxpayers stop working for the government and start working for themselves.

When is it? If we paid only municipal taxes, Tax Freedom Day would be January 14, 2008. This is also when provincial and federal taxes kick in. The Fraser Institute says that Canadians have to **wait another 5 months**, until June 20th, before they're done with taxes for the year and earn the first penny they can keep for themselves.

Is there data to back this up? Statistics Canada says that Canadian cities received 12 cents out of every tax dollar in 2004. In 2007, it was down to a meagre 8 cents. *Time for Cities* uses official sources to explain how it got so bad and why it's getting worse.

Do Canadians know about this? Most Canadians realize that they pay 40% to 50% in taxes. Few know how the total tax burden gets distributed and how little of it benefits their city. Municipalities get very little attention in the provincial and national media. Canadians hear about huge provincial and federal surpluses (\$29.5 billion in 2007) coming from rapidly growing urban economies but few realize that property tax is not tied to the economy.

Why celebrate Tax Freedom Day? Bringing attention to Tax Freedom Day each January brings attention to the dire situation that cities are in. Canadian towns and cities need money to fix crumbling bridges and to replace rusting water pipes. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities estimates the municipal infrastructure deficit at \$123 billion. Canadian towns and cities need to invest in public transit, build waste treatments plants and allocate new resources to climate change issues and sustainability. They need new powers to deal with festering social problems, globalization and criminal activity.

How will Canadians know about Tax Freedom Day? This media kit is being sent to media outlets and Canadian municipalities. Each Canadian hamlet, village, town and city is invited to develop unique ways to bring attention to their specific issues. The 2008 *Tax Freedom Day* posters can be downloaded at www.timeforcities.ca.

- Plan editorial coverage of *Tax Freedom Day* to be printed / aired on January 14.
- Schedule interviews with mayors, premiers and other politicians on *Tax Freedom Day*.
- Please feel free to print and distribute *Tax Freedom Day* posters.

For more information, please contact Gaëtan Royer, 604-816-5399. gaetanroyer@timeforcities.ca



Tax Freedom Day
You're done paying city taxes on January 14, 2008!
Sorry you won't keep a penny until June 20th...

Time for Cities is a thoroughly researched call for critical resources and powers needed by Canadian towns and cities. It calls for a Clarity Act for cities and their long overdue recognition as a level of government.

In 2004, Canadian cities received 12 cents out of every tax dollar. Today it is down to a meager 8 cents. In 2009 it will be 6 cents. *Time for Cities* tells the story of how it got so bad and why it's getting worse.

The number of older homeless persons tripled in Vancouver. Are the homeless getting old? No. Old folks are becoming homeless. Toronto and other cities face bankruptcy. In small towns, water turns deadly. When the Federal government downloads programs and services, provinces get the money, cities get the problems. Governments pass a crushing burden onto cities and charities. *Time for Cities* explains how this happens and how to stop it.

To achieve their potential, Canadian towns and cities need resources and powers. They need money to fix crumbling bridges and to upgrade rusting water pipes. They need to invest in public transit, develop our economy and use resources more sustainably. Canadian towns and cities need new powers to deal with festering social issues, global changes, migrant populations and criminal activity.

Time for Cities is a blueprint for Canada to build a just society.

Loved it! A great writing style: breezy, punchy, anecdotal, with the substance to require it to be taken seriously.

Gordon Price, Director, The City Program, Simon Fraser University

ISBN 978-0-9784913-0-7

City Forum Press / Presse Cité Forum

Port Moody, BC. www.timeforcities.ca

Time
for
Cities

Gaëtan
Royer

Quotes from Time for Cities

On taxes

If a pattern can be drawn from countless stories of Canadian cities coping with their own decay, it is the abject inadequacy of the property tax system.

Property tax is the only control available to local politicians to speed up or slow down an inevitable outcome.

In other countries, many tax instruments exist in urban tool boxes. Canadian cities' tool boxes are locked. Provinces have the key.

On downloading and grants

Environmental protection stands out as an area where systematic downloading caused significant harm to cities, residents and, of course, the environment itself.

Passing responsibilities to cities is a good policy as long as resources are downloaded as well. Downloading is bad policy when it is just passing the buck... without any of the bucks actually being passed.

Public policy and public services are public responsibilities, not pre-election goodies.

One-time grants by senior governments are always preceded by a complex grant application process and on-your-knees lobbying that place civic leaders in competition with one another, like reluctant participants in some sick beauty contest.

On governance

Cities are the most effective, most compassionate and by far the most accessible level of government – except that cities, quite unfortunately, are not a level of government.

It is Time for Cities.

Tax Freedom Day

You're done paying city taxes on **January 14, 2008!** Sorry you won't keep a penny until June 20th...

Where's the government surplus going if it is not helping towns and cities where we live?