

**Report to WRAFT Members July 2006**  
**WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE – DON'T STOP NOW!**

We have finally attracted the attention of the Provincial government, but now we must redouble our efforts to get them to follow through and achieve some reform.

Congratulations, and thank you to those of you who sent letters to your MPP and/or the Ombudsman – they are working.

As you are no doubt aware, following Premier McGuinty's declaration that his government is seized with the property tax concerns, Finance Minister Greg Sorbara announced a moratorium on reassessments for 2 years, while MPAC works to implement the recommendations of the Ontario Ombudsman. It just so happens that this means you will not be hit by the next reassessment until after the 2007 provincial election.

This has provided a temporary reprieve to waterfront property owners from the tax shift that has so concerned us all. I say all, because at any reassessment there are winners and losers but most waterfront owners are losers, as the average shift of the tax burden to waterfront property owners has approximated 8% per year recently.

If the moratorium was not in place, and the 8% per annum shift continued, waterfront property owners would pay an additional 8% next year and 16% the following year for a total of 24% of their current year's taxes over the next 2 years – in other words, the moratorium has avoided approximately an additional \$120 million to be unfairly paid by waterfront property owners in Ontario.

So our lobbying has paid off financially as well as drawing attention to a major policy problem.

Now we must attack the policy problem and ensure that the system is properly studied during the hiatus, and modifications introduced when reassessment recommences in 2008 for the 2009 tax year.

Unfortunately, at a recent meeting with Minister Sorbara, he showed absolutely no intention of going beyond the recommendations of the Ombudsman and studying the system. **This is not an acceptable response to our crisis.** It is now over 2 years since such a study was promised by the Liberal government and it is just a few months since the Premier said he was "seized" with the issue.

By now most of you will have received your final tax bill, and many of you will have found the increase over last year staggering. Such increases must not only stop, but some roll back should be seriously considered as part of any reform resulting from our recommended study.

**WHAT CAN WE ALL DO TO HELP?**

There are 4 things:

1) **Talk up the need for reform**, particularly with your friends that may have some influence in Provincial matters! You can keep up to date through the WRAFT website at [www.wraft.com](http://www.wraft.com) and through the CAPTR website at [www.captr.org](http://www.captr.org).

- 2) Have your members let their representative at Queen's Park know how they feel! Go to "**Contact your MPP**" on the WRAFT website to send an email.. Also you may get their phone number or address from Elections Ontario at 1-800-677-8683, or consult its website [www.electionsontario.on.ca](http://www.electionsontario.on.ca).
- 3) Have your members contact the Ontario **Ombudsman** at [info@ombudsman.on.ca](mailto:info@ombudsman.on.ca) , and request that he should study further the need for reform. Although MPAC administration and processes clearly need improvement (as he has already recommended), the underlying system also needs modification if it is to meet any normal standards of fairness. The volatility, unpredictability and shifts caused by adherence to a *pure* CVA system in any hot property market are disastrous, particularly to seniors on fixed incomes.
- 4) **Solicit funds from your members.** To organize a fund raising among your members, contact Scott Mortimer at [Scott.Mortimer@cibc.ca](mailto:Scott.Mortimer@cibc.ca) .We still need another \$50,000, for lobbying and media relations.

**Thanks for your help – we won't be successful without it.**