

# north shore news

## LETTER: Let's crunch the numbers on transit levy

North Shore News

May 13, 2015 12:00 AM

### Dear Editor:

I just finished reading Rick Harrison's excellent letter on TransLink.

I am sure many others feel exactly the same way about wanting to vote Yes, but are reluctant to and will probably vote No because of TransLink's lack of transparency. I was looking at my hydro bill recently and realized there is a transit levy on all hydro bills.

A quick online search revealed some of TransLink's sources of income including 24 per cent — \$1.42 billion — coming from the 17 cents per litre fuel tax, property taxes contributing 21 per cent, transit fares 32 per cent and parking sales tax four per cent. We are all paying TransLink every day, somehow.

From what I have read, the hope is a Yes vote will add 0.5 per cent to the seven per cent PST tax. But when I look at the expenditures — and won't go through them all — two stand out: the interest expense at 13 per cent of income and the cost of transit operations at 60 per cent.

Does this large discrepancy between transit income of 32 per cent and expenditures of 60 per cent have anything to do with the failure of TransLink to implement proper fare paying procedures? How long were those fare boxes sitting there doing nothing? Have these figures ever been released and could this make a difference?

Now for the interest expense of 13 per cent, that on my calculator comes to approximately \$185 million a year going towards nothing except paying the banks. That's one-third of the required \$500 million.

If the TransLink management are already lost, how can we expect them to be able to find cost savings when they don't seem able to do their jobs without complaining about lack of money? They are either incapable of finding or not looking for savings.

With the help of the federal and provincial governments this could be solved. And just where are the federal and provincial governments when it comes to financial aid?

The province has announced a surplus so here is the best place that money could be spent — on the future of British Columbia. What is the common denominator of all great cities, it's a fast, efficient and affordable transit system.

Are you reading this, Christy, or are you still asleep in Victoria? Wake up and help the future of B.C. It's not in LNG, but already here in Vancouver.

Resources are fading and the competition fierce. Let's stop inventing more taxes. Get people travelling and working in a green and efficient manner and all of British Columbia will benefit from it.

Howard Wishaw

West Vancouver

What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by [clicking here](#) or post a comment below.

© 2015 North Shore News