

Association of Saskatchewan REALTORS®
NEWS RELEASE
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Saskatchewan REALTORS® say Premier Brad Wall's suggestion that future changes in provincial support for municipalities be governed by changes in provincial revenue is a breakthrough statement that can lead to real reform of the antiquated property tax.

The concept of sharing provincial revenues is more significant in the long term than a one-time boost in grants, says REALTORS® spokesman Bill Madder.

REALTORS® support a system where municipalities would receive an annual share of the broad taxes collected by the province, turned over unconditionally for local needs. They say it would permanently lift the pressure on local property taxes, and give local councils real autonomy and capacity to respond to the demands of growth, and help hold down property taxes.

REALTORS® have long advocated property tax reduction, via two-phase reform:

- Roll-back of school property taxes to levels similar to Manitoba and Alberta, and
- Genuine sharing of provincial revenues with local councils, tying annual changes in the amount of shared revenue to changes in own-source income from provincial tax bases.

For over a year, the provincial government has been in talks with municipal representatives about a so-called "revenue sharing" system that would tie provincial funding to provincial priorities at the local level. REALTORS® oppose the concept because it perpetuates the old practice of handouts.

REALTORS® want municipalities to get access to funding other than property tax, provided with no strings attached.

"The funds must be seen as the municipal share of the broader taxes – and not as a handout based on provincial priorities, or changed at the whim of the government.

"Local governments are able to make their own decisions. Their voters will hold them to account for it. They may even choose to use new funds to reduce the burden on property owners."

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