

Harbourfront

Community Association

Station A, Box 144

Toronto, M5W 1A2

For: Mayor Rob Ford, Toronto City Council, April 2, 2013

Re: Sweetheart Tax Deal Proposed For The Federal Port Authority

The Sweetheart Tax Deal, proposed by the Federal Port Authority is unfair to all other taxpayers in this city. Why is the Port Authority, a federal agency, proposing that it get a sweetheart deal, and pay less property tax than the rest of us?

When Porter Air expanded the use of the Island Airport, we, the taxpayers in this city, had to cancel our plans to convert all of Toronto Island into a Central Park for Toronto. Having all of Toronto Island as a public park is still our dream. In comparison to this magnificent long term goal, the Island Airport is a second rate use for island land.

Now we learn than the Island Airport is not profitable, and that the Federal Port Authority wants the city to subsidize Island Airport operations by giving it a sweetheart tax deal. First, we lose our land to the feds, and now we have to pay them to mismanage it.

**How much will this sweetheart tax deal for the Island Airport cost the city?
How much will this sweetheart deal for the Port Authority add to our tax bills?**

The Island Airport land is potentially the most valuable land in the city. It has the best view of the skyline and the entire waterfront. This unique point of land stands in the middle of Toronto Harbour the way the Sydney Opera House is the central focus for Sydney Harbour. This valuable land has the potential to be as famous as the Sydney Opera House. Instead, this land is being used for a second-rate industrial purpose, which is privately owned, and potentially saleable to American Airlines. And now we have to subsidize them. Forget it, please. I don't want to subsidize the Port Authority.

The Port Authority owes more than \$50 million in assessed taxes, but has refused for years to pay its taxes, on the basis that it is negotiating the value of the land. Maybe you can help me understand how this works. Can I, as a taxpayer, refuse to pay city taxes for years on the basis that I challenge the assessment, as the Port Authority is doing?

If the Port Authority is having difficulty paying its city taxes, why then is the Port Authority paying its manager more than Toronto is paying its Mayor. Why should the city subsidize a federal agency that pays its managers more than the Prime Minister? It doesn't make sense for the city to subsidize a Federal Port Authority, which can find \$80 million to build a tunnel, in an effort to save a money-losing airport, but won't pay its city taxes.

Why am I being asked to subsidize a federal airport that's losing money, and refuses to pay its fair share of city taxes? Can taxpayers sue the Port Authority to get our money back from this sweetheart deal? How far has this sweetheart deal gone, anyway?

Max Moore, Harbourfront Community Association
www.harbourfrontcommunity.info