



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seniors Advocate Reminds Seniors of the Option for Property Tax Deferral

Victoria, B.C.— B.C.'s Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie is reminding seniors they can defer paying their property tax through the provincial Property Tax Deferment (PTD) Program.

“With the PTD program, the province pays the property tax on behalf of the senior directly to the local government. The senior homeowner does not need to pay back the money to the province until the property is sold,” said Mackenzie. “The PTD program has been gaining in popularity and had 63,581 deferrals in 2018/19 with an average of \$4,064 in property tax deferred.”

New in 2020, is an online application and the ability to automatically renew each year. Previously, applications were paper based only and needed to be re-submitted each year. Seniors can now visit the Ministry of Finance website and complete the form online or download the form and mail it in. For individuals without the internet or those needing more assistance, they can call the Ministry of Finance at 1-888-355-2700, and an agent can help with the application process. Seniors can also visit their local Service BC office or municipal government office if there is one open in their area and receive a copy of the form.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many municipalities have extended their property tax deadline and penalty rate and date, so homeowners are encouraged to contact their municipality to understand their tax deadline.

Learn More:

For information about the Property Tax Deferment Program and to apply online, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/defer-taxes>

For assistance with applying to the Property Tax Deferment Program, contact the Ministry of Finance:

Toll-free 1-888-355-2700

Office: 250-387-0555

Email: TaxDeferment@gov.bc.ca

For information about the Office of the Seniors Advocate, visit:

<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/>

Media Contact

Celine Comeau | Communications Officer

Cell: 250-886-4307



BACKGROUNDER

- B.C.'s Property Tax Deferment (PTD) program allows eligible homeowners 55 and older, surviving spouses and persons with disabilities to defer paying their property taxes.
- The deferred taxes accrue and are paid back when the house is sold, or if the homeowner wishes, they can pay back all or a portion of the deferred amounts earlier.
- Each year there is an average of \$172 million taxes deferred and \$70.6 million repaid.
- The PTD program began in 1974, and as of September 30, 2019, the cumulative total amount of property tax deferred is \$1.35 billion.
- There are currently 63,581 homeowners deferring their property tax with the average homeowner using the PTD program accruing a cumulative total of \$21,502 in deferred property taxes.
- There are more than 10,000 new applicants for PTD each year. In the past five years, the number of new users has increased by 148%.
- While the PTD program is growing each year, 2019/20 saw fewer new users for the first time: 11,879 new users in 2018/19 compared to 13,719 in 2017/18.
- The median assessed value of the homes in B.C. for which property taxes were deferred in 2018/19 was \$998,000, up 10% from the previous year.
- The total amount of property tax deferred in 2018/19 was over \$237 million, a 14% increase over the previous year. Of this amount, approximately \$37 million were newly deferred.
- The PTD deferral program charges simple interest only. Under the regular program, homeowners are charged simple interest at a rate not greater than 2% below the prime rate. Currently, the interest rate is 1.95%. Over the past five years, the interest rate has ranged from a low of .85% to 1.95%.