



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Alistair MacGregor

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT - COWICHAN-MALAHAT-LANGFORD

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Honourable Diane Lebouthillier
Minister of National Revenue

Connaught Building, 7th Floor
555 Mackenzie Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
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October 10, 2017

To the Hon. Minister of National Revenue,

I am writing concerning systemic problems constituents are facing when going through Canada Revenue Agency's income tax processing system.

In November 2016, the CRA announced that it was making changes to "streamline processing activities." However, since then constituents in my riding have seen a significantly reduced level of service on the part of the CRA, resulting in a substantial increase in amount and severity of cases that my office is now forced to assist with.

When income tax processing for Vancouver Island was transferred from Surrey to Winnipeg in 2016, some cases that used to take a couple weeks to process are now taking a couple months. The worst that I have seen took a full 17 weeks to process. The cases that have been held up the longest are those who have completed their income taxes by mail or who needed amendments to be mailed in. While an extra few days could be reasonably added to this type of process, it does not account for the substantial and excessive delays that my constituents are facing.

Lengthy processing times are creating spillover effects that are impacting constituents in a variety of ways. The most common impact is on seniors' ability to receive their GIS benefits. Seniors who rely on their GIS cannot wait this long on the CRA without it seriously threatening their ability to keep food on the table and a roof over their head. Some other impacts include GST cheques being affected and unfair interest accruing.

Moreover, when frustrated constituents do try to phone the CRA they find it impossible to ever speak to anyone in order to find out about their file. Constituents advise us that the Winnipeg CRA Office doesn't even have a dedicated phone number for them to call. There is only the general tax line, which no one ever answers.

This situation is leaving them little choice but to come to my office to seek assistance. This is unacceptable in terms of customer service and is placing an untenable burden on the resources of my office.

I trust you will move swiftly to address these serious issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alistair MacGregor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Alistair MacGregor, MP
Cowichan-Malahat-Langford

Cc : Pierre-Luc Dusseault, MP (NDP Critic for National Revenue)

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