



Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC

Representing seniors in British Columbia since 1950

www.coscobc.org

June 1, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Re: COSCO BC calls for provincial government to reverse the interest rate charges for Property Tax Deferral Program:

The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO BC) is advocating to the BC government to reverse the interest rate changes to the property tax deferral program announced in BC Budget 2026.

Background

BC's Property Tax Deferral Program allows seniors 55 and older, surviving spouses, persons with disabilities, and families with children, to defer annual property taxes as a secured loan repaid with interest when the property is sold. About 78,000 households participate in the program.

Budget 2026 changed the program significantly for new deferrals from 2026 onward. The interest rate will increase from Prime minus 2% simple interest (or 2.45% at current rates) to Prime plus 2% compounded monthly (effective rate of 6.64% annually).

Statistics

The BC government proposed this change as a cost-neutral adjustment to bring interest rates in line with current lending practices. Our concern is that the new rate exceeds commercial bank lending rates. Furthermore, the government's own data show increased revenues from the program.

The main rationale given is that wealthy homeowners were using the system as an investment tool. But Ministry of Housing statistics note 44% of participants have household incomes under \$70,000. Ministry of Finance data published May 5, 2026, shows the median annual deferral is \$3,800 and that 80% of participants repay within 10 years by way of selling their homes. On average, participating households have an outstanding balance of about \$30,000 consistent with cash-flow management for those with low to moderately priced properties in their communities.

ASK

COSCO BC asserts that most people deferring property taxes are seniors, surviving spouses, persons with disabilities, and families with children who are trying to keep their heads above water in an expensive province. Deferring property tax can provide a few hundred dollars more each month to manage basic expenses or offset a one-time major expense – a significant amount when typical incomes are just \$2000 to \$3000 per month.

COSCO President Leslie Gaudette says, “BC government statistics themselves show the program benefits lower-income people so they can stay in their homes. The program allows seniors to pay for other pressing needs such as better food, medications, mobility devices, dental care, vision care, hearing aids, home support or other health care expenses. Healthier seniors are more able to contribute to healthy families and communities. The government must reverse this draconian change to the tax deferral program.”

Important points to know:

1. For those already in the program, existing balances remain at previous interest rates
2. The deadline to opt-out is June 1, 2026. Homeowners enrolled in automatic renewal must act before June 1st to avoid the new rate. For those who will use tax deferral funds to pay for daily living expenses, tax deferral for the coming year remains a viable option.
3. You may wish to consult a trusted financial advisor for advice regarding your decision to defer property taxes.

For more information refer to the COSCO BC website at [https://coscobc.org/campaigns/including the COSCO Briefing](https://coscobc.org/campaigns/including-the-cosco-briefing) [https://coscobc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/COSCO Executive-Briefing-Property-Tax-Deferral-May-2026-.pdf](https://coscobc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/COSCO_Executive-Briefing-Property-Tax-Deferral-May-2026-.pdf)

For info on the Property Tax Deferral Program visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/property-tax-deferment-program>

Media Contact:

Leslie Gaudette, President
M: 778-908-5608 (preferred)
H: 604-630-4201

Established in 1950, the Council of Senior Citizens’ Organization of BC (COSCO BC) is an umbrella organization made up of many seniors organizations and individual associate members. Registered under the Societies Act since 1981, COSCO now represents over 85,000 seniors across British Columbia. We promote the well-being of seniors, advocating for policies that allow seniors to remain active, independent, and fully engaged in the life of our province.

----30----