

Dear Mr. John Stevenson, Secretary, Ontario Securities Commission & The Honorable Iris Evans Minister of Finance, Province of Alberta,

As a personal investor I feel that it is necessary to comment on the proposed changes for regulating the exempt securities market in Alberta. The proposed changes will do very little to actually protect investors like myself, which from my understanding is the desired outcome at the end of the day. It will only increase the difficulty of investors taking charge of their own financial well being.

The suggested changes really “miss the mark” for a number of reasons including the following:

1) Currently when I sign up for an investment into these offerings, I must sign two copies (and in some cases more copies than that) of **WARNING** pages that are clearly bolded and cannot be mistaken as anything other than a **WARNING**. Those pages are taken right out of the Offering Memorandums prepared which very clearly (and frighteningly in most cases) explain all potential risks of the project and investment, including numerous unlikely and extremely “worst case” scenarios. Investors must sign these forms stating clearly that they understand the risks of the investment and that they are prepared and able to lose their money if the project doesn’t go as planned and any combination of the very real risks occur.

Having to fill out a Know Your Client form in addition to this would be pointless given the circumstances. If a KYC is really necessary, then surely all of the risk explanations can be dropped from the Offering Memorandums. But the current set up is clearly more effective in protecting investors. Other investors I know have sometimes declined the investment opportunity after reading all of the risk factors noted in the investment documents. And that has happened even on extremely secure projects with considerably more security than any mutual fund on the market. I’m obviously all in favor for protecting investors, as are any ethical promoters, but this will not be effective!

In addition to that, with no disrespect to the true financial advisors out there (my broker may or may not be included, depending on the product/ commission of the day) who respect their clients and sincerely look out for all of their needs and best fits for products, KYC forms in no way guarantee that a financial advisor will do what is truly best for the clients, especially considering that depending on the licensing agreements, sponsorship for licenses, etc., many (if not most) financial planners are restricted to the products they “recommend”, or in other words, SELL, to the client. Most financial advisors cannot even recommend Real Estate (which should be part of any balanced portfolio). Furthermore, how anyone can say that an RBC financial advisor is completely unbiased is completely beyond me. Does anyone honestly believe that if an RBC advisor thinks a particular TD Bank product is slightly better for the client that they’ll really send them up the street to the other bank? That isn’t realistic at all. If the client fills out a KYC with RBC it doesn’t mean the client ends up with the best product for their needs. It simply means they’re likely to end up with the closest fit available from RBC. Thousands of investors a year incur losses on stocks and lose millions in mutual funds after signing KYCs and trusting their “advisors”. I believe many of them would have been much better

off in an exempt, real estate backed project that they can actually understand and personally evaluate risk on.

KYCs in relation to this issue will do nothing to solve the problem. They are being signed left and right before purchasing other products which can ultimately fall to a zero value as well.

2) In regards to the recommendation that exempt dealers and sales representatives be required to take the Canadian Securities Course, once again this will not solve the real issues or do anything to reach the end goal of protecting investors. **Real estate offerings in particular have nothing at all to do with mutual funds or following the stock market.** The relevancy in a sales representative being “skilled” at evaluating stocks, if such a thing truly exists, doesn’t apply to evaluating land opportunities and future development sites. **INVESTING IN ANYTHING HAS RISKS!** Let me the client decide if they want to gamble on land or stocks. Given the current regulations anyone investing over \$10,000 must sign an eligible investor form regardless. How are these points being missed? If a new investor chooses to invest in an exempt offering and loses their \$10,000, it’s not perfect but at least the downside has been capped. If they lose more than \$10,000 it is because they qualified to make that choice! That is based on regulations already in place.

If anyone wants to question whether or not the current rules truly explain the risks to investors, I recommend trying to write a cheque for \$40,000 alongside of those lovely **WARNING** pages (Risk Acknowledgment Forms).

If the project makes sense, and I qualify, let me choose how to invest my money. Taking a securities course isn’t going to in any way affect anyone's ability to effectively choose properties and then spend three years trying to re-zone it for development. **An actual, true, real estate course, and land use course would do a lot of people (including investors) way more good than anything CSC related.** There are some good courses out there, by the way.

The reality is, whether or not I fill out a KYC form with a financial planner OR an exempt dealer, there is no guarantee that I will receive unbiased information or advice. If the MFDA wants to level the playing field, perhaps massive, bold print **WARNING** pages should be written all over the mutual fund agreements in addition to becoming mandatory on all advertisements. I’m sure it wouldn’t be difficult to find a list as long as football field full of unhappy investors who lost millions upon millions of dollars in mutual funds even over the last six months. Had they been invested in land, it may have been a different story. I personally find real estate investing to be safer and void of as many fees than Mutual Funds.

These proposed changes need to be taken back to the drawing board and completely revised (much like the Royalties issue). It’s always scary when “experts” from the outside, who don’t even play in the same arena (such as the MFDA), start giving suggestions on how to improve it.

Sincerely,

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