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**Subject:** Concerns Regarding Proposed 50.8% Tax Increase in Wilmot Township Draft Budget

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Dear Members of the Wilmot Council and Staff,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the alarming 50.8% tax increase proposed in the Wilmot Township draft budget. This significant hike is unconscionable, especially given the current financial hardships faced by many of your constituents. The ongoing rise in food costs, stagnant wages, and other economic pressures have already placed a substantial burden on your neighbours. Implementing such a drastic tax increase at this time demonstrates an irresponsible disconnect from the realities that many of Wilmot's residents are grappling with daily and does not prioritize the community's well-being.

This proposed tax increase is unreasonable and not remotely in the best interest of the public you were elected to serve. It is crucial that the council and staff consider the severe impact this will have on the financial well-being of your neighbours.

This unjustifiable tax increase will reduce the disposable income that residents spend at local small businesses, which are already struggling to survive on thin margins. It will also impact their ability to participate in community events and donate to local charitable causes. The financial strain resulting from this tax hike could lead to a decrease in volunteerism, as people might need to prioritize paid work to cover their increased expenses.

In response to the financial difficulties Canadians are facing during the holiday season, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario have introduced holiday tax relief programs to support families and help them save on essential purchases. However, Wilmot's proposed tax increase would effectively redirect these savings into Wilmot Township's coffers.

Considering that a 10% increase in municipal taxes is generally viewed as excessive across the province, a staggering 50.8% hike far exceeds what any reasonable person would anticipate. This level of increase can accurately be termed extraordinary or unprecedented and highlights a rather unsettling opaque tactic to misdirect and attract widespread attention to justify some undefined goal, one that has not yet been transparently communicated to the public.

This absurdly excessive tax hike continues to highlight how this municipality is oblivious to the fundamental needs of people to thrive in this rural farming community. This unprecedented tax hike should prompt residents and possibly the province of Ontario to seriously consider Wilmot's amalgamation with the Region of Waterloo. Such a decision could lead to more balanced and sustainable financial management, ensuring that responsible fiscal policies are better aligned with the actual needs of your constituents and the public good.

I urge this council to reject the proposed tax increase and direct your staff to responsibly explore ethical alternative solutions that do not disproportionately affect your neighbours

who are already struggling daily.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Regards,  
Mike Rice

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I would like to have this correspondence added to the upcoming Special Council Meeting Agenda for the 2025 Budget and The Regular Meeting of Council Agenda Package under correspondence to form part of the official record.