

Hard-pressed businesses urged to appeal unfair rates rise

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Businesses facing massive rates rises in Scotland have been urged to lodge appeals following a controversial revaluation.

The Scottish Conservatives said any business which feels it can't afford the increase should make those views known to ministers by formally objecting.

The more firms which do so, shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said, the more likely it would be for the SNP to have a change of heart.

Businesses right across the country have warned they will go to the wall if the rates hike is applied, with some facing increases of more than double.

They say the system for revaluation is flawed and needs to be reviewed.

It comes as new figures revealed Scotland continues to lag behind the rest of the UK when it comes to employment, with the jobless number rising by 6000 in the last quarter.

And that will only get worse, the party said, if more businesses are forced to close as a result of the punitive changes.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"Businesses facing these extortionate increases could send a very clear message to the SNP on this.

"By formally appealing these increases, finance secretary Derek Mackay would soon realise just how severe a problem this is.

"He's refusing to listen to opposition parties and experts, but he might listen to the individuals affected.

"Latest employment figures again show Scotland is trailing behind the rest of the UK, and this is becoming a stubborn and worrying trend.

"If the Scottish Government doesn't heed warnings about firms going out of business as a result of these rises, the unemployment queues are only going to get longer north of the border.

“Derek Mackay seemed able to find tens of millions squirreled away for budget negotiations, so perhaps he could find some extra cash for hard-up businesses too.”

Notes to editors:

For more information on how businesses can appeal, visit:

<https://www.mygov.scot/business-rates-appeals/>

Today, it emerged Scotland continues to lag behind the rest of the UK on employment:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-38979937>