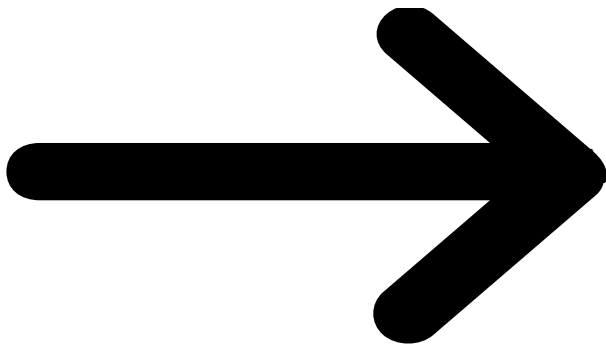


# Sturgeon must resist 'needless' tax increases

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Nicola Sturgeon has been urged to resist hiking up taxes even further on workers and businesses ahead of next week's Holyrood budget.

At First Minister's Questions today, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said more than enough money had arrived thanks to recent Barnett Formula dividends from Westminster.

As a result, he said the SNP government should heed the advice of business leaders and commit to no further increases in tax.

He highlighted the plight of the Capercaillie restaurant in Stirlingshire, which recently went up for sale after being told its business rates would rocket by £17,000 a year.

And he warned against following Green party policies – something the SNP would need to do to secure their budget support – of creating a new domestic tax for householders.

Instead, Barnett cash announced last month in the UK budget could be used to spare firms and workers any additional penalties.

**Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:**

“Businesses across Scotland need support, and need it now.

“But faced with devastating increases in rates, how can the First Minister expect them to survive?

“In addition, she can't expect hardworking Scots to keep paying more in taxation.

“The Greens have made it clear, if they are to get the SNP’s budget through the Scottish Parliament, they will demand a new taxation on households.

“But that’s not what the people of Scotland need or want.

“Nicola Sturgeon has more money thanks to Westminster spending, and that means there is no need for needless tax hikes.

“The cash is there – the SNP now needs to do the right thing by taxpayers.”