

Damian Watson  
Belfast, ME  
LD 225

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Taxation Committee, I oppose [LD 225 / LDs 632 & 746].

My name is Damian Watson and I have owned The Brookside Inn in Smyrna, ME, for over 7 years and last year I purchased Seascapes Motel & Cottages in Belfast, ME. I love Maine and the motel industry allows me to help facilitate travel to many people both in and out of state. From what I can see, at 9%, Maine already has one of the highest lodging taxes in the United States. This past year, I had a drop in occupancy at both locations and from what I hear the state had a 9% decrease in visitors. In planning for the summer season ahead I am hoping and praying for a busier year.

A 12% tax rate would make Maine uncompetitive, having negative impacts on tourism, and subject local Mainers to increased costs.

A local option tax would increase costs for visitors and hurt Maine's tourism industry at a time when we need to attract more guests, not drive them away.

Please do not raise the taxes beyond what they already are, as this would have a huge negative effect on my businesses and those I employ.