

Ed Damm
Bar Harbor
LD 746

I'm writing to ask that you support, LD746, "an Act to Authorize a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging to Fund Municipalities and Affordable Housing."

We moved to Bar Harbor, 46 years ago. We were musical instrument makers and wanted to bring our craft to share in Maine. Fortunately as a young couple in 1979, there were possibilities in buying a fixer up home in Bar Harbor without having a lot of cash. We were able to raise our 3 children on the island and in the schools. Our local school now is in dire need of replacement after its decades of use, even with periodic retrofits and upgrades.

In over a decade the housing prices have skyrocketed and the housing stock has dwindled as off island people have bought investment homes to turn into short term rentals. The Town has put in zoning restrictions to slowly turn some of the houses back into year round housing for locals.

We love our town but we need help. Every year we create a great environment for family vacations. 4.9%, on average of our family incomes goes to pay property taxes, the highest in the United States. We send in \$230 million in tax money to the state each year.

We need help. Compared to other states we are on the bottom end of fees for short term rentals. When we visit our daughter in Florida there are state, county and local taxes collected on a room rental.

A 2%, local option tax would go a long way in helping our police, fire, water, sewer and highway departments to keep up with the demands on services generated by over 4 million people vacationing on our island each year.

LD746, would also generate funds for the Maine State Housing Authority. There is a dire lack of housing on our island and all across the state and this bill could help with solutions throughout the state.

Please help us, vote for passage of,
LD746.

Sincerely, Ed Damm