

Jacqueline Levesque  
Bar Harbor  
LD 746

Support for LD746: Authorize a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging  
Dear Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to request your support for LD746, “An Act to Authorize a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging to Fund Municipalities and Affordable Housing”. This bill is crucial for the sustainability and prosperity of our beloved town, Bar Harbor, and similar communities across Maine.

Bar Harbor is a gem of Maine, attracting over 400 million visitors each year. While the state as a whole has seen a slight decrease in visits, Bar Harbor continues to outpace these levels, solidifying its status as a premier tourist destination. However, this mass tourism brings significant demands on our town's infrastructure and services. The strain on our water systems, sewer systems, sidewalks, roads, police, fire, emergency medical services, harbor and piers, public restroom facilities, and waste removal services is considerable.

To give you a perspective, taxpayers in Bar Harbor are now being asked to pay more than one million dollars for garbage disposal in a town with just 5,500 citizens. This is disproportionate compared to larger cities in Maine that are paying much less. The costs for infrastructure upgrades needed to support millions of people primarily fall on the local taxpayers. As someone who has lived in Bar Harbor since 1963, I have witnessed the growing strain on our community and personally feel the weight of increasing tax rates, especially as a retired person.

The implementation of a local option sales tax on short-term lodging, as proposed by LD746, provides a much-needed solution. This tax would allow us to return money to support the community, easing the financial burden on Bar Harbor taxpayers and benefiting rural communities throughout Maine. It is essential to understand that Bar Harbor is a significant tax income source for the State of Maine. Supporting this bill does not just benefit our town; it ensures the continued flow of tax revenue to the state by maintaining the quality and appeal of our infrastructure and services.

Let us not kill the golden goose. By supporting LD746, we can ensure that the burden of mass tourism does not fall unfairly on the shoulders of our local residents. We can maintain the charm and functionality of Bar Harbor, making it a place that tourists will continue to visit and enjoy, while also providing essential funding for affordable housing.

Your support for LD746 is not just an investment in Bar Harbor but an investment in the future of all communities in Maine. It is an opportunity to create a sustainable model for tourism and community funding that can be replicated across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jacqueline Levesque