

Cara Ryan
Bar Harbor
LD 746

Dear Representatives,

I know we're all in this together & I'm proud, as a Bar Harbor resident (& married to a Bar Harbor native son), to live in one of Maine's economic driver towns. Through the state's sales tax, towns like ours generate huge revenues that are then redistributed across the state, clearly favoring less advantaged municipalities. It's stunningly charitable--except to the towns that bear the load in generating that tax revenue. These towns have been oversold to tourism and are now oppressed by so many tourists and the pressures they bring. Pressures on our infrastructure, on our housing (when it's so much more profitable to turn homes into rentals), on our taxes. We, the little people, the majority of residents who DON'T make money on visitors, who want to live here because it's Home, who serve on our volunteer municipal boards & committees, we're having to carry increasingly heavy loads with our taxes. We need your help, your vote--not to take any money away from your towns, but to add a negligible amount to our visitors' lodging bill so we can pay for the huge sewage pipes t h e y require. You may think we should be able to generate revenue without a local options tax. Well, we're trying--we already have huge parking fees (but is this ideal? this charge hurts our near neighbors much more than a lodging tax would). Because we're so small--only 5,000 or so mostly very middle-income residents, it's very hard to equitably generate the kind of revenue we need to host somewhere between 1.5 & 3 million tourists every year. The Town sees very little benefit from these numbers--only the vendors, many non-Maine residents--make money. The Town needs a way to cover the costs of being good hosts to so many. We need this local options tax. Please vote for LD 746.

Many thanks for your time, your service, and your love for our great state!

Cara Ryan, Bar Harbor