

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Jim MacNeill and I own Coast Village Inn in Wells.

Although I find it honorable that you would like to enact legislation to assist our homeless shelters, I find it disheartening that you are attacking our lodging industry to aid your support.

Maine relies on our hospitality sector for survival. We have two peak seasons. The beaches and parks fill in the summer months and our snowmobile trails and ski areas fill in the winter. If we have bad weather in the summer and/or warmer temperatures in the winter, we all suffer. Last summer, Maine was down 9% in visitation. I do not have data to support how the ski areas and snowmobile trails did, but I know it was a mediocre snow season. I cannot imagine that there was much snowmobile activity in the state. Ski areas can manufacture snow but we had warm temperatures that probably did not allow for optimum snow making.

According to print news, Maine is projected to be down 25% this summer for two reasons.

- President Trump's tariffs on Canada
- Governor Mills opposition of President Trump

I have actually received hate mail about Governor Mills and her defiance over President Trump. The handwritten piece of mail, mailed from Brockton, MA, stated that the person will not be visiting Maine this summer.

Adding more taxes further imposes harm on our industry. You can call these taxes fees, but the bottom line is that it is taxation. A tax, by definition, is a financial charge imposed on an individual or entity by a governmental organization to support government spending. You may choose to call it a "fee" although it is truly a tax. You are charging a tax to provide funding for a government initiative.

I have a solely owned, inexpensive motel in Wells. My motel clientele chooses to stay because I am affordable and offer clean rooms. I cannot compete with the Holiday Inns and the B & B's in the area. Please do not make it harder for me to survive by imposing additional taxes on my guests. Quite literally, during the months of May and June, you would be taxing my guests 11% instead of an already high 9% lodging tax.

Maine needs to stop placing additional economic impact on the visitors from away. If we lose tourism, we lose a very large workforce that provides a very sizable state payroll tax influx. If you want to suppress the hospitality industry, you will create a negative impact on our state because our workforce will be depleted. This will require more homeless shelters that need funding because there will be more people unemployed.

