

**HOSPITALITY
MAINE**



45 Melville St. Augusta, ME 04330
207-623-2178
www.hospitalitymaine.com

327 Water St, Hallowell, ME 04347
207-623-0363
www.mainetourism.com

Testimony of Nate Cloutier

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
May 2, 2025

In Opposition to LD 1476, “An Act to Support Maine’s Homeless Shelters by Imposing a Fee for Booking Hotels, Short-term Rentals and Recreational Vehicle Camping Reservations”

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Nate Cloutier, and I am here today on behalf of HospitalityMaine, representing Maine’s restaurant and lodging industries. I am also here on behalf of the Maine Tourism Association (MTA). MTA has been promoting Maine and supporting tourism related businesses—from lodging and dining to camps, retail, guides, amusements, and historic attractions—for over 100 years. MTA respectfully opposes LD 1476, “An Act to Support Maine’s Homeless Shelters by Imposing a Fee for Booking Hotels, Short-term Rentals and Recreational Vehicle Camping Reservations.”

Let me start by saying we all understand the importance of investing in our communities. We want strong infrastructure, healthy towns, and a welcoming environment for both residents and visitors. But this proposal puts the burden on one industry that is still on very shaky ground.

Tourism in Maine has not fully recovered. Summer visitation dropped nine percent last year, and we’re already hearing concern from our members about what this season will bring. There’s still a lot of uncertainty. We don’t know yet if Canadian visitors will return in strong numbers. Tariffs and inflation continue to drive up costs. And there are many small businesses, especially seasonal ones, that are hanging on by a thread.

This bill would add a two-dollar fee to every lodging stay: hotels, motels, inns, short-term rentals, campgrounds, even RV parks. That’s not insignificant, especially in a state where lodging is already taxed at one of the highest rates in the country. When you combine that with the rising costs of fuel, food, and travel, every extra charge adds up and can push visitors to look elsewhere.

Our members continue to hear from visitors that it has become increasingly expensive to vacation in Maine.