

Alexis Miller  
Cottage Connection of Maine  
LD 414

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

My name is Alexis Miller, and I am the Experience Curator for Cottage Connection of Maine, my family's small business. Actually, we're a microbusiness – more on that later. I am here today to express my strong opposition to LD 414, "An Act to Prohibit Deceptive Pricing."

I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of this bill on Maine's microbusinesses (1-5 total people) and small businesses, which represent the backbone of our economy. 99% of all American businesses are small businesses, and 56.3% of Maine employees are employed by small businesses. (Source: 2023 Small Business Profile for Maine, U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.) Our own business, with just three full-time employees, exemplifies the challenges faced by the nearly 150,000 small businesses across our state, 77.87% of which are sole proprietorships. The smallest businesses will be hit the hardest by this bill.

I think the shortest and clearest example comes not from the Vacation Rental industry, but from restaurants: to comply with this bill, they would need to create multiple menus with varying prices, depending on whether a customer dines in, orders delivery, and the size of the group of diners. The National Restaurant Association estimates compliance costs at nearly \$5,000 per operator annually, totaling \$17.5 million statewide every year.

Also, this bill is redundant. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has already addressed deceptive pricing with a 2024 rule that exempts restaurants and clarifies requirements for lodging. The FTC rule prohibits hidden fees and requires "all-in" pricing, making LD 414 unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer funds, especially given our current budget deficit. According to Gallup polls before the election, the economy is a top voter concern for 9 in 10 people. This, combined with the concerns over the supplemental budget deadlock in this legislature, and the current deficit of this state, means that the biggest thing this bill will do, should it move on, is become a prime example of Mainer's frustration at this body's lack of consciousness of the needs of Maine people.

In conclusion, I oppose LD 414 because it imposes unnecessary costs on small businesses and duplicates existing federal regulations. I urge the committee to reject this bill and focus on policies that support economic growth and stability for all Mainers. Let's put money back into Mainers' pockets, instead of wasting funds on redundant issues.