

TESTIMONY SUBMISSION by Azlan S Ahmad, resident of the Town of Surry, CD2, to the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development with respect to the Public Hearing on LD 1181 dated April 15, 2025

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and members of joint standing committee on Housing and Economic Development,

I implore you today, as you seek input from interested and concerned citizens, to not move forward with LD 1181.

My name is Azlan S Ahmad, also known as Azie. My wife and I are fulltime residents in our residential home in Surry, which we love. Because we are of an age now that does not give us professional employment that we both had for over 30 years, we became Airbnb hosts as being in the area of Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor and so many wonderful places are a dream for out-of-state and even out-of-country vacationers. They have MAINE on their BUCKET lists!!! We are glad to accommodate them and help them enjoy Maine to all it has to offer.

We both enjoy and are proud to offer our guests a wonderful "Maine Experience" which we ourselves enjoy on a daily basis. We Do Not support the removal of short-term rentals or commercial designations placed on our property or the property of others. If LD1181 succeeds, we expect many negative consequences that will affect residential homeowners, local and state economies, including family businesses, as well as my wife and myself. I urge you to consider:

Short term rentals produce needed income for many retirees. Utility and other costs have skyrocketed. Two winters ago, my wife never took off her winter coat inside until she went to bed. Our monthly energy costs are actually equal to our monthly tax costs. It is more expensive to live here than where we lived in Manhasset, New York. Crazy! And we are not alone. Many seniors find it hard to make ends meet. I implore you not to punish them or us further by interfering with their short-term rental solution to stay financially solvent. This small additional income over our SSI benefits also helps to pay increased property taxes, increased liability insurance, needed repairs / improvements and general maintenance.

The desire to to increase housing for the unhoused should not be at the expense of decent, law-abiding Mainer's, who faithfully pay their taxes, including the additional occupancy taxes, and are working hard to provide a needed service as we pay our own bills. If you have ever provided this type of service then you know there is no free lunch, short-term rental hosts work hard and happily pay their fair share to Maines Tax Base.

Our work as short-term rental providers have many advantages for our communities across Maine. Needed living space for Maine College bound families, staycation guests who prefer non-hotel atmosphere, and most importantly, these short-term guests boost Maine's tourism economy. Local restaurants, grocery stores, downtown "ma and pa" shops, and the like, all benefit. Do not punish one sector to promote another.

My opinion is that short-term rentals play an integral part of Maine's housing needs and should not be abolished to accomplish your goal. A win-win solution should be for Maine's legislation to explore incentives for real estate investors to build affordable housing, rather than punish one sector to promote another. Hotels and Motels provide short-term rentals, and we see no effort to impact their business model? Too big a lobby to mess with? Free market societies work; not government overreach and regulations.

In closing, we ask that the honorable people of the Maine Legislature do the hard work of finding better solutions to the housing problems without targeting short-term rentals. Now and for the future.

Respectfully Submitted,
Azlan S Ahmad, Town of Surry