

Sherwood Booker
Waterville

Dear Heath and Human Services Committee Members,

My name is Sherwood Booker and I own Brown House Properties in Waterville, Maine. Our company owns and manages 350 rental units from Belgrade to Cannan – representing a large portion of Central Maine. In 2014 we complied with the updated radon legislation and tested all of our applicable units; which at the time was around 275 units.

Our company investigated the expense of having all of our units tested in order to remain complaint and the cost was astronomical – we instead opted for our Maintenance Director to take the necessary courses required to become certified to administer these tests. After his training, it took several weeks to complete all of the testing with a heavy administrative work load. Although our company had found a way to remain complaint while still keeping costs down (not hiring a 3rd party company to conduct testing), the administrative burden cast on the office was challenging to manage while still maintaining our level of customer service and maintenance standards.

I am concerned that with landlords already struggling with collecting rents from tenants due to COVID-19, the great expense and immense administrative burden associated with testing would be too much for landlords to comply with. Tests must remain in the unit under closed door conditions for 48 hours. For an example, Tenants must be given 24 hours notice prior to us entering their unit. Once notified, a Maintenance Tech will place the testing canister in their unit and then return 48 hours later to pick up the test. The tenant must be notified of each time. The test needs to be notated in our records and brought to the lab for testing. Once we receive test results from the lab, the tenants must be notified of the results as well as the state. As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts in this process which is a large under taking for landlords.

Additionally, in 2014 when we began testing, the majority of our buildings were under 0.03 picocuries per liter of air (a rating of 4.0 and greater requires mitigation). Of all the estimated 275 tests we conducted, our highest rating was 3.1 picocuries and was only for one building and was still considered “safe” and required no mitigation. After speaking with peers within the industry, they had similar results with many tests reflecting far below the threshold.

Changes to the earth, foundation and building happen over long periods of time and testing yearly is far too frequently. Not only is it redundant, it's a financial and time expense that landlords just cannot handle at this point.

PLEASE HELP OUR INDUSTRY AND OPPOSE LD 819!