

Debra Brown
Portland

I am writing to ask you to please pass LD 1365, An Act to Prohibit Municipalities from Prohibiting Short-term Rentals.

I own a 3-unit apartment building in Portland. One unit is maintained as a short-term rental (STR). This arrangement allows me to use the unit myself for several months each year while still earning income during the remaining months. Without this arrangement, it would be extremely difficult for me to afford to utilize my property in a way that benefits both me and the State of Maine.

This bill benefits not just me and other property owners in Maine, but also the State of Maine:

- * STRs provide a lodging alternative to hotels that is essential to Maine's tourism economy. Airbnb alone paid \$10M in taxes to Maine for 2019 alone.
- * Visitors are going to come to Portland whether we have STRs or not--the difference is when they stay at an STR, the money they pay stays right here in Maine--and if they were banned that would just be a windfall for the mostly out-of-state hotel corporations.
- * We know from experience that STRs thrived last summer while many hotels stumbled. Without STRs the picture may have been even bleaker for Maine businesses that rely on the tourism economy.
- * We live in these communities too and do not want to see runaway growth of STRs. That's why we would support an amendment to this legislation that allows municipalities to enact reasonable regulation of STRs, as Portland has done.
- * The ability to rent property is a fundamental private property right, and towns denying property owners their ability to rent is unacceptable.
- * Town bans on the use of short-term rentals diminish property values and could cost the state millions of tax dollars.
- * We already have strong regulations and fee structure in place. Re-evaluating them every year wastes valuable resources and doesn't address the housing shortage.

Thank you.