

Dawn Huntley

From: Jacqueline Gill <mermaidcottageri@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 7:11 AM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Cc: Rep. Casey, Stephen M.
Subject: OPPOSE H7657

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Dear Representatives,

I am writing as a property owner in Middletown, Rhode Island, where I occasionally rent my home as a short term rental. I strongly oppose House Bill H7657 and urge you to reconsider its implications for homeowners, small business operators, and the broader Rhode Island economy.

Short term rentals like mine are fundamentally residential in nature. This is a home that I own, maintain, and use personally. It is not a hotel or commercial enterprise in the traditional sense. Reclassifying properties like mine as "commercial" represents a significant and inappropriate shift that mischaracterizes how these homes are actually used.

I am particularly concerned about the potential downstream impacts of this bill. Redefining short term rentals as commercial properties could open the door to substantial property tax increases, placing an unfair burden on homeowners who rely on occasional rental income to offset the rising costs of ownership. For many of us, this is not a large-scale business, but a way to responsibly manage our investment and remain financially sustainable.

Additionally, the expansion of local regulatory authority outlined in this bill introduces uncertainty and complexity. Increased licensing requirements, inspections, and potential changes to building standards would create new barriers that are costly and difficult for individual homeowners to navigate.

The bill also raises concerns about fairness. Allowing municipalities to treat identical homes differently based solely on short term rental use creates what is effectively spot zoning within established residential neighborhoods. This sets a troubling precedent and undermines consistency in property rights.

I am also disappointed that this proposal appears to bypass the work of the state's Short Term Rental Study Commission, which was intended to evaluate these issues thoughtfully and with proper data. Moving forward without that process, and without a comprehensive economic impact study, risks unintended consequences for property values, local businesses, and Rhode Island's tourism economy.

Short term rentals play an important role in supporting tourism, especially in communities like Middletown. Visitors who stay in homes contribute to local restaurants, shops, and services. Overly restrictive measures could reduce this activity and negatively affect the local economy.

I respectfully ask that you oppose House Bill H7657 and instead support a more balanced, data-driven approach that protects both community interests and the rights of responsible property owners.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

J Gill

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