

## Dawn Huntley

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**From:** Mark Sheehan <msheehan0819@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2026 9:06 AM  
**To:** House Municipal Government and Housing Committee; rep-carson@rilegislature.gove;  
Rep. Cortvriend, Terri-Denise  
**Cc:** Rep. Casey, Stephen M.  
**Subject:** I OPPOSE HOUSE BILL H7657 - 392 Forest Avenue, Middletown, RI

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Dear Representative Carson, Representative Cortvriend and Representative Casey,

My name is Mark Sheehan and I own a property located at 392 Forest Avenue, Middletown, RI 02842. I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill H7657, which proposes to redefine certain short-term rentals as commercial property. As a short-term rental owner in Rhode Island, I am deeply concerned about the significant and far-reaching consequences this legislation could have on property owners, small businesses, and our state's tourism economy.

Short-term rentals are fundamentally residential in nature. They are privately owned homes that contribute to the fabric of our communities. Reclassifying them as commercial properties is a fundamental mischaracterization that undermines longstanding property rights and sets a troubling precedent.

One of my primary concerns is the potential for substantial property tax increases. If short-term rentals are classified as commercial, municipalities could impose significantly higher tax rates. This creates an unfair and targeted financial burden on homeowners who rely on short-term rentals to support their families and maintain their properties.

Additionally, this bill would expand local regulatory authority in ways that introduce unnecessary complexity and cost. Increased licensing requirements, inspections, and potentially stricter building codes could make it far more difficult for responsible owners to operate, without clear evidence that such measures are needed.

I am also concerned that this legislation effectively enables spot zoning within residential neighborhoods by allowing identical properties to be treated differently based solely on use. This raises fairness and consistency issues that could have long-term implications for property owners across the state.

Equally troubling is that this bill appears to bypass the work of the Short-Term Rental Study Commission, which was specifically established to evaluate these issues in a thoughtful and data-driven manner. Moving forward without the benefit of that process, and without a comprehensive economic impact study, risks unintended consequences for property values, local businesses, and municipal tax revenues.

Short-term rentals play a vital role in supporting Rhode Island's tourism economy. Overly burdensome regulations or reduced supply could lead to decreased visitor spending, ultimately harming the very communities this bill aims to protect.

I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill H7657 and to support a more balanced, data-driven approach that considers the perspectives of property owners, small business operators, and the broader community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Sheehan  
392 Forest Avenue, Middletown, RI 02842  
(860) 389-7752