

Title: Opposition to H7657

[.HouseMunicipalGovernmentandHousing@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseMunicipalGovernmentandHousing@rilegislature.gov)

I am contacting you to strongly oppose H7657. This bill is a direct threat to property rights, small business owners, and the broader local economy.

I am a long-term resident of Rhode Island, having been raised in Warwick, completed undergraduate studies at URI and spent each summer at my beachhouse in Narragansett. I have rented my small beachhouse to avid tourists and beachgoers for summers over the past two decades. I have also rented the house to URI students during the academic year nearly every year over this period.

I am opposing H7657 for the following reasons:

- **STRs Are Not Commercial Uses**
Short term rentals are residential properties. They are homes, not hotels. Reclassifying them as commercial is a fundamental mischaracterization that undermines long standing property rights.
- **The Bill Opens the Door to Massive Property Tax Increases**
By labeling STRs as “commercial,” municipalities would have the ability to tax them at entirely different, and much higher, rates. This creates a clear path to substantial and targeted tax increases on property owners.
- **The Bill Expands Local Regulatory Power**
The bill would enable towns to impose additional licensing requirements, inspections, and even building code standards that go beyond what is required for residential homes today. This adds cost, complexity, and uncertainty for owners.
- **The Bill Creates De Facto Spot Zoning in Residential Neighborhoods**
This legislation allows municipalities to treat identical homes differently based solely on use. That is effectively spot zoning within established residential neighborhoods, setting a dangerous precedent.
- **The Bill Bypasses the STR Study Commission**
Importantly, this bill did not come out of the state’s Short Term Rental Study Commission. That commission was established specifically to evaluate these issues in a thoughtful, data driven way. Ignoring that process undermines the integrity of the legislative approach.

I especially have concerns that the Bill will create unanticipated economic upheaval because :

- **There has Been No Economic Impact Study**
There has been no comprehensive analysis of the economic consequences of this bill. That includes the impact on property values, local businesses, or municipal tax bases.
- **The Bill Poses Risks to Rhode Island's Fragile Tourism Economy**
Short term rentals are a critical part of Rhode Island's tourism infrastructure. Reducing supply or overburdening operators will have ripple effects, including decreased visitor spending and ultimately lower tax revenues for the state and our communities.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Antoni, Ph.D. URI Class of '80
6 High St
Narragansett, RI 02882