

Dawn Huntley

From: Nicole Ferrigno <nmferrigno@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2026 11:27 AM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Cc: Rep. Casey, Stephen M.
Subject: OPPOSE H7657

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Dear Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee,

I am writing as a Rhode Island property owner to strongly oppose House Bill H7657.

This bill represents a significant overreach that would fundamentally change how short-term rental (STR) properties are classified and regulated across our state, with serious unintended consequences for homeowners, small business operators, and local economies.

First, STRs are residential properties, not commercial developments. These are homes that owners maintain, invest in, and in many cases personally use. Reclassifying them as “commercial” based solely on rental activity is a broad and inappropriate shift that undermines long-standing property rights.

Second, this bill creates a clear pathway for disproportionate taxation. By enabling a commercial classification, municipalities could impose significantly higher tax rates on STR owners compared to neighboring residential properties. This introduces inconsistency, unpredictability, and financial strain for homeowners who have made investments under existing rules.

Third, the bill expands local regulatory authority in a way that invites inconsistency across municipalities. Additional licensing requirements, inspections, and evolving standards will create a fragmented and uncertain operating environment. Property owners will be left navigating a patchwork of rules that can change town by town, increasing administrative burden and cost without clear benefit.

Fourth, this approach effectively enables selective treatment of identical properties within the same residential neighborhoods based solely on use. That raises serious concerns

about fairness and sets a troubling precedent for how property classifications could be applied in the future.

Importantly, this bill moves forward without the benefit of a comprehensive economic impact analysis and outside of the established Short-Term Rental Study Commission process. Decisions of this scale should be data-driven and thoughtfully considered, not expedited without full evaluation of the consequences.

Short-term rentals are an important part of Rhode Island's tourism ecosystem. They support local businesses, generate tax revenue, and allow homeowners to offset rising costs. Overly burdensome regulation risks reducing supply, discouraging investment, and ultimately harming the very communities this bill aims to protect.

I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose House Bill H7657 and instead pursue a balanced, data-driven approach that protects property rights while thoughtfully addressing community concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Ferrigno

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