

## Dawn Huntley

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**From:** Suzette Sozio <suzeeee2980@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 1:03 PM  
**To:** House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
**Cc:** Rep. Casey, Stephen M.  
**Subject:** OPPOSE H7657

Dear Rhode Island Legislators,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to the proposed legislation that would reclassify short-term rentals (STRs) as commercial properties in Rhode Island.

Short-term rentals are, at their core, residential properties. They are homes—not hotels—and treating them as commercial entities is a fundamental mischaracterization that undermines long-standing property rights. This shift would set a troubling precedent for how residential property is defined and regulated.

Reclassifying STRs as commercial use also opens the door to significant property tax increases. Municipalities would gain the ability to tax these properties at higher commercial rates, creating a clear path for disproportionate and targeted tax burdens on homeowners. We use our STR for personal use as well!

Additionally, the bill would expand local regulatory authority in ways that introduce unnecessary cost and complexity. New licensing requirements, inspections, and building code standards—beyond those applied to residential homes today—would place undue strain on property owners and create ongoing uncertainty.

The legislation also risks creating de facto spot zoning within residential neighborhoods. Identical homes could be treated differently based solely on how they are used, which undermines the consistency and fairness that zoning laws are meant to uphold.

It is also concerning that this bill bypasses the Short-Term Rental Study Commission, which was specifically established to evaluate these issues in a thoughtful and data-driven manner. Ignoring that process weakens the integrity of the legislative approach and raises questions about whether all relevant perspectives have been adequately considered.

Equally troubling is the absence of a comprehensive economic impact study. There has been no clear analysis of how this proposal would affect property values, local businesses, or municipal tax bases—leaving stakeholders without a full understanding of its consequences.

Short-term rentals play a vital role in Rhode Island’s tourism economy. Overregulation or reduced availability could lead to decreased visitor spending, negatively impacting local businesses and ultimately reducing tax revenues for the state and its communities.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to oppose this legislation. It represents a direct threat to property rights, small business owners, and the broader local economy of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Suzette Sozio

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