

From: Ruth@Little Gnesta B & B [mailto:gardener612@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 04, 2018 8:26 AM

Subject: Re: RE: RE: S.204 in House General

To Members of the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs:

My name is Ruthie Sproull, and I own, manage and live in a small four bedroom bed and breakfast in Newport. I am speaking on my behalf and on behalf of other owner occupied short-term rentals in the Northeast Kingdom.

Right now, the state is trying to figure out how to manage and regulate the explosion of short-term rentals caused by the great success of AirBnB.

So far, there has been no legislative solution. Instead, we have the recently amended Health Department rules, all thirty-plus pages of them, which fail to make the distinction between owner-occupied establishments like mine and large, fully-staffed corporate hotels. We are talking about comparing apples to oranges, with the end result being extremely unrealistic and burdensome regulations being imposed on smaller, owner-occupied operations. In order to comply, many of us will have to either scale down or go out of business.

Currently you are reviewing S.204 as a solution to the issues presented by short-term rentals, but I would offer that H.815 is a better choice because it alleviates the inequalities created by the new Health Department rules. H.815 addresses *all* lodging in Vermont and creates a tiered system of regulation more suitable to Vermont's diverse lodging options.

A major flaw in S.204 is in the definition of short-term rental (see <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/18/085/04301>). It doesn't include rooms in people's houses, which accounts for many AirBnB listings. That puts people in my situation at a serious competitive disadvantage.

And, actually, all of us in the lodging business are offering short-term rentals of some sort. We should seek a definition which is both simple and inclusive. H.815 attempts to solve this issue.

Specifically, H.815 does the following:

- Uses one definition for any short-term rental and sets a general policy that applies to all of them. Note that the tax department definition is universal for any short-term rental and so is the collection of the meals and lodging tax.
- Sets a standard policy for an owner-occupied operation or short-term rental.
- Sets a tiered regulatory structure that differentiates between types of short-term rentals based on owner-occupancy and management structure, somewhat similar to the classification of childcare or homecare facilities.

Therefore, I would urge you to incorporate H.815 into S.204 or replace S.204 with H.815 so that we can fully address the inequities created by the rewritten Health Department rules. We need to make sure that *every* lodging option in the state is accounted for and playing by the same rules.

Peace~Fred~Shanti,

Ruth Sproull

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