

VERMONT INN AND BED AND BREAKFAST ASSOCIATION
Position for Bill S- 204

The Vermont Inn and B&B Association is very pleased that the Vermont Legislature is taking a look at the unlicensed, short term rental challenges for our state. Bill S-204 is a good start. For the bill S-204, **VIBBA has the following Recommendations & Suggestions.**

1. **Include the following departments:** Tax, Health, Tourism & Marketing, Fire Safety, & Financial Regulation. Pool State resources and look at the bigger picture for the State. They should all have access to the unlicensed short term registration applicants.
2. **Unlicensed short term rentals:** We support that regulations should include ALL lodging establishments including 1 & 2 bedroom properties currently not covered in the regulatory system.
3. **Include all unlicensed short term rental platforms in the bill-** to include companies such as Airbnb, Flipkey, Homeaway & VRBO.
 - i. **Tax Department to rework the Airbnb tax deal**
4. **Standardize self-regulatory checklist!** Health & Fire Safety should jointly create a comprehensive inspection list to cover their needs for the self-regulated checklist. The State should then use existing departmental inspectors to train licensed professionals (private sector) to administer these inspections. Inspection fees (ala motor vehicle inspection fees) will pay for the inspections, eliminate redundancy, reduce the strain on State employees and provide an increase in the private job sector. These can be done once a year or done through an audit process.
5. **Increase tax revenues without increasing taxes:** Top down (State Government) Bottom up (Local municipalities) Strategy – Have Statewide penalties for non-compliance. **\$500 for each occurrence.** Rework the Airbnb deal... tax revenues are being lost daily and with no enforcement. Homeaway and VRBO have no deal at this time.
6. **Get local governments involved** – Register each rental property as a local business. Split the registration fees between State and Local? Creates a tax revenue stream for local governments while giving another level of enforcement: eliminating the need for the State Government... to do it all.
7. **Registration application for S 204-** should include:
 - a. Full contact information of host- permanent address, phone & email
 - b. Address of the property being rented
 - c. Local known contact info- address, phone, email (for all offsite unlicensed rental hosts)
 - i. To be used for guest issues, safety, inspections
 - d. Commercial insurance certificate- protects the hosts from catastrophic issues with guests. (Majority of unlicensed hosts are not covered properly!)
 - e. Registration fee collected and License Number Issued
 - f. Require that License Number be in all advertised publications of short term rentals.

Added Benefits of this Bill:

Affordable Housing: As has already been stated in the LCAR meetings, by applying these regulations and enforcing them some people renting unlicensed properties would return their properties back to long term rentals and apartments... thus increasing the supply and helping to minimize the affordable housing crisis in this State.

Respectfully Submitted,

VIBBA – Vermont Inn and Bed & Breakfast Association – Tim Piper, President – February 7, 2017