



S.79: Short Term Rental Registry Provision
House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs
Amy Spear, Vice President of Tourism
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The Vermont Chamber of Commerce represents 1,200 members statewide, including hundreds of lodging properties. Informed by routine engagement with our membership, Vermont's tourism and hospitality industry, and our partners at American Hotel and Lodging Association, we maintain a knowledgeable perspective on issues impacting the tourism and hospitality industry.

We are supportive of the creation of a statewide short-term rental (STR) registry as outlined in S.79. The Legislature has taken progressive actions (most recently Act 10 in 2018) to regulate the STR market in Vermont, and we see a rental registry as the next step in the progression. Establishing the registry is an important step to ensure a safe rental environment.

While STRs contribute positively to Vermont's economy, they operate in a relatively unregulated environment. The pandemic has put a fine point on what can happen during a public health crisis when unlicensed properties providing overnight accommodations are anonymous and state officials do not have the means to contact them. Registration would be a necessary first step to improve communications and would also provide data if the State chose to enforce health and safety regulations in the future.

Home sharing is not a new concept, it is how the Bed & Breakfast and inn industry began in Vermont. The hospitality industry has always welcomed competition on a level playing field, and the Vermont Chamber has supported the rights of property owners to occasionally rent their homes to earn extra income for up to two weeks without regulations. However, we are now seeing large numbers of STRs that are not occasional renters but unlicensed and unregulated property owners running small to medium sized lodging businesses. With anonymity, STRs are afforded an unfair and significant competitive advantage over licensed properties by having no oversight. The foundation set by establishing a STR registry would be a positive step forward to ensure a safe rental environment and move towards equity in the lodging marketplace.

We appreciate the continued dialogue and efforts to pursue safe overnight accommodations for the traveling public and look forward to remaining a resource.