

55 Henry Street  
Burlington, VT 05401

March 19, 2023

Rep. Thomas Stevens, Chair — House General & Housing Committee  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Representative Stevens,

Please pass H.184, reversing unnecessary and burdensome revisions to our regulations regarding lead paint. My wife, Caryn, and I are in our 60s and 70s and we do the painting on two duplexes we manage as rental properties. Caryn has been trained and certified to do this work safely on older buildings.

I regret being critical of the Health Department, but I do think they are off base making lead abatement and property management excessively expensive and bureaucratic. This is ill-advised across the board, but especially unfair and borderline abusive for small “landlords” like ourselves.

We follow the guidelines, take the issue most seriously, and bring bags of paint chips to the hazardous waste disposal depot. I’m sure everyone does not do the same and I doubt there is currently any consequence for ignoring the regulations.

For instance, two historic barns on a property bordering one of our duplexes were shedding paint profusely when we first purchased this duplex in 2010. We were especially concerned because our two grandchildren lived in the downstairs unit and played in their backyard in close proximity to the barns. This took years to remedy and it only happened because we complained repeatedly. Neither the regulations, the Health Department, nor the City would have noticed or taken action otherwise. I just checked the EMP Compliance Statement data base and the property is “not currently EMP Compliant.” It’s not clear if the property is even registered. I checked some years ago on another large scale Burlington property owner whose units in our neighborhood were poorly maintained and peeling paint. None of the ten or more properties in this portfolio had ever filed the annual EMP Compliance Statement required by law. I notified the Health Department. I just checked on two of the properties around the corner from our home: one is in compliance and the other is “not found in our system.”

The system in place could be effective if diligently administered, but it is a system that exists on paper — not in practice.

Making the regulations more stringent will burden only those who don't scoff at the law and will do absolutely nothing to protect us from the hazards of lead in paint on older buildings.

Please pass H.184.

Thanks,

Michael Long