

March 29, 2023

Rep. Thomas Stevens
VT House General & Housing Committee Chair
12 Winooski Street
Waterbury, VT 05676

Dear Honorable Mr. Stevens and the House General & Housing Committee,

My husband and I are small business owners who own two pre-1978 rental housing units which provide affordable housing to mostly seniors and young working class citizens in North Troy, Vermont which is located in close proximity to Jay Peak Resort, one of the largest employers in Orleans County.

We are respectfully asking you to pass H.184 which would reverse the Health Department's imposition of hundreds of dollars in fees and thousands of dollars in specialty contractor insurance requirements for landlords of pre-1978 rental units who paint and maintain their own units. The Health Department's new lead paint rules were adopted in October of last year. We are asking you to pass this bill for the following reasons:

- As owners of older buildings we have doing everything necessary to make sure these buildings are clean, safe, comfortable and compliant with all health and safety regulations. We have been able to keep rents affordable for our tenants because we have been able to do much of the maintenance ourselves without having to hire expensive outside labor. We have completed all of the trainings necessary to complete minor repairs with regards to lead safety at an affordable cost to us. However the new regulation would require us to obtain more expensive contractor licensing and contractors insurance which will place economic hardships on our business forcing us to pass that expense on to our tenants. Passing H.184 would allow us to continue to do needed repairs without the additional expenses.
- Should we decide to sell the buildings because of the additional economic hardships imposed on us due to these and other regulations, there is no doubt in our minds that new owners will take the buildings out of long term rental use and convert them from multi use yearly dwellings into single use private homes or seasonal rentals or simply demolish them. This will exacerbate the lack of affordable housing in

our area. We believe this will apply to many buildings throughout the state. Passing H.184 will eliminate some of these economic hardships, allowing landlords to offer affordable housing.

- The new regulations that prevent many landlords from conducting minor repairs with regards to lead, could in effect, result in a deteriorating safety situation and longer tenant exposure to the possibility of lead contamination. There are very few RRPM certified contractors in the state, many of whom will not take on such small jobs or cannot get to them in a timely manner. The wait time for a contractor to arrive to do the work could be significant resulting in unnecessary delays in resolving a problem that could have been easily fixed by the landlord in a few hours and at a much lower cost. Approving H.184 would eliminate this situation.
- As a small business, we do not have offices, staff, maintenance crews or professional commercial insurance. The imposition of thousands of dollars in additional expense to meet the new requirements will drive up rents, and prevent landlords from making any reasonable return on their investment. It is already extremely expensive for a landlord to evict a tenant who is not paying rent or being destructive to their property. Adding additional unnecessary expenses would just add to the economic hardships small landlords face. Passing H.184 would eliminate these additional expenses.

We appreciate your service and willingness to sit on such an important committee. Again we encourage you to support H. 184 which would continue to ensure high lead control standards without driving up the cost of housing to the workforce or imposing economic constraints on small landlord operations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Patricia & David Sanders
Jay, Vermont
802-988-4193