

SHARON I ZUKOWSKI

79 Center Road – Apt 1
Essex Junction, VT
sharonzukowski@yahoo.com

Representative Thomas Stevens
Chair House General & Housing Committees
tstevens@leg.state.vt.us
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Dear Rep. Thomas Stevens, Chair House General and Housing Committee,

I ask you to pass H.184 which reverses the Health Department's decision to require landlords to pay thousands of dollars a year in licensing fees and specialty insurance to paint, repair, and maintain pre-1978 rental units. The insurance fees are in excess of \$2,500 a year and insurance companies likely will not insure a person who is not a professional painter or contractor. As a small Landlord that will more than double my insurance costs, if I can get the insurance.

I own a tri-plex and a duplex. I live in the tri-plex and my daughter lives in the duplex. My rents are 30% below market and the 3 tenants I have out of four have lived in my buildings for 7 years, one who pays with Section 8 vouchers. All of the units have enclosed windows and no peeling or exposed lead paint. I have no issue with being lead certified and taking any course that keeps me up to date on lead safety. But the licensing and insurance is not affordable to me. I will have to raise rents or sell one or both of my buildings if I cannot do this work on my own.

The other issue is there is a shortage of painters and contractors and most affordable contractors cannot afford or pass the certification or licensing exams or afford the specialty insurance, which will mean that small landlords will not be able to find someone to paint, maintain or repair the units at all. I paint at every change-over and sometimes in between to freshen the units. I paint the unit porches every year. I cannot afford to pay someone to. It is impossible to get a dependable contractor to come for small repairs and maintenance or to find a lead certified painter. It is also not affordable for a small landlord to pay for small repairs and minor maintenance.

I hope that there will at least be an exception for small landlords and owner-occupied rental properties, but, really, it is going to be difficult for any landlord, big or small, to manage maintenance and repairs under the restrictions imposed presently. It will cause rents to go up or to be removed from the market.

Please include this letter into the Committee's public record for consideration of H.184

Sharon Zukowski