

February 8, 2022



Honourable Tim Houston
Premier of Nova Scotia
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Dear Premier Houston:

On behalf of the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS), we are writing to you in regards to the Short-Term Rental (STR) regulations and the correlation to the housing crisis throughout Halifax Regional Municipality, and other Nova Scotia communities. We have attached a [compelling article](#) on the impact of Airbnb and like portals, on the housing crisis which is not unique to Nova Scotia.

We have also copied your Chair of the Panel on Housing for the HRM, Geoff Maclellan, who as Past Minister of Business, was an architect in establishing policy around Short-Term Rentals. As a result of that work, the Liberal Government repealed the Tourist Accommodation Act (TAA) - which was dated and not being enforced - and implemented a strategic, simplified model for entry into the Accommodation business. TIANS accepted that change; however, we were concerned on a number of fronts. Geoff will confirm that we believed the current model did not go far enough to support Nova Scotia's tourism industry. It excluded the requirement for small operators and campgrounds from registering; it did not limit rental days and there was no mechanism to ensure primary residences were indeed owner occupied. There is no process in place for follow up on the new portal, nor integration with Tourism Nova Scotia (exacerbated by COVID-19). We also raised the concern of the growing housing crisis and believe that without limiting these units to commercial areas in high demand centres, more long-term inventory would disappear. TIANS agreed to support the changes, with the understanding that the system would evolve over time, and since 2018 we have been advocating for small operator and campground inclusion.

The ease with which short-term rentals are established in every community has removed thousands of long-term rental units from the market and government policy has exacerbated the situation. Smaller properties wishing to be part of industry are excluded and the current system creates a cloak for multi-owner entities that are now protected by government policy.

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The reason we have reached out today, Premier Houston, is we believe a part of the solution to housing accessibility is tied to policy as it relates to regulation of STR portals. If one considers Halifax alone and limits principal owned short-term rentals to commercial areas, immediate availability of housing would increase in residential areas that are currently being negatively impacted.

A significant part of the solution is in front of your government, with the opportunity to address the current short-term rental policy and the inter-connectivity to the housing crisis. We believe addressing this policy area will also support Nova Scotia's tourism industry as we rebuild from this global pandemic.

It is ironic, that as we finalize this letter there are news reports of hotels (designed to support tourism) being converted for housing and what used to provide long-term housing (STR inventory) being used for visitors.

We offer our continued assistance in providing a tourism lens on this important issue impacting our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wes Surrett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wes Surrett
TIANS Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Darlene Grant Fiander', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darlene Grant Fiander
TIANS President

cc Minister Dunn, Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
Minister Lohr, Municipal Affairs and Housing
Geoff MacLellan, Chair, Panel on Housing for the HRM
TIANS Board of Directors

Attachment/Link (1)