



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Municipal Complex
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801
(603) 610-7200
Fax (603) 427-1526

Jack Blalock
Mayor

January 30, 2019

Chair Melanie Levesque
Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Re: The City of Portsmouth's written testimony in support of SB 69.

Chair Levesque and Members of the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee:

The City of Portsmouth supports SB 69 which creates enabling legislation for municipalities to regulate and license short-term rentals. Without the ability to license and regulate this fast growing sharing economy, municipalities, property owners, visitors and citizens are at a disadvantage.

It is important for a municipality to be able to conduct limited inspections of residential property used as short-term rentals for fire and life safety issues. This bill would permit municipalities to conduct limited inspections of residential property used as short-term rentals. These inspections would ensure that smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and the premises are sanitary. Without such enabling legislation, these inspections of residential property used for short-term rentals are prohibited. Permitting these limited inspections would protect the health and safety of residential property owners, those who rent from them and local citizens. SB 69 supports the City's Legislative Principles of maintaining and improving life safety issues.

The licensing of short-term rentals would give municipalities a better sense of who owns the property and how property in the City is being used. This is important because as a City and a State, we are grappling with rising real estate costs and limited workforce housing. We try to balance economic opportunity while addressing housing needs of our residents while keeping the character of our neighborhoods intact.

The City also supports SB 69 because it does not limit the authority of a municipality to regulate short-term rentals under local zoning ordinances or other local authority. The Legislature has recognized that each community is uniquely qualified to assess the suitability of the use of its land. (RSA 674: 16, I and RSA 674:17, I). The City has adopted Legislative Principles that include support for legislation that protects local decisions about zoning and advocates to maintain local authority.

SB 69 supports several of the City's Legislative Principles so I urge this Committee, on behalf of the City of Portsmouth, to support the bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jack Blalock, Mayor of the City of Portsmouth