

Written Testimony in Opposition with Strong Concerns Senate Bill 666 - Real Property - Short Term Rentals

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony to express significant concern and opposition to Senate Bill 666 as currently drafted.

As a municipal leader responsible for balancing economic opportunity, neighborhood stability, public safety, and local governance authority, this legislation raises serious policy and implementation risks. While the bill attempts to create uniformity regarding short term rental operations, it does so by removing essential local control from counties and municipalities that are closest to the impacts created by these operations.

Local governments experience the direct consequences of short term rentals. These impacts include increased noise complaints, transient occupancy pressures, parking congestion, enforcement burdens, and the gradual erosion of long term housing availability for residents. Municipalities must retain the authority to regulate based on unique community conditions, housing stock, and infrastructure capacity. Senate Bill 666 instead establishes a state level restriction that limits a municipality's ability to prohibit certain operations even when local data demonstrates harm.

Allowing lessees and sublessees to operate short term rentals without permitting local jurisdictions to fully regulate or prohibit such activity undermines property management structures, tenant accountability, and neighborhood stability. This framework risks creating enforcement gaps where property owners, neighbors, and municipalities are left navigating disputes without clear authority to intervene effectively.

The bill further shifts regulatory imbalance toward commercial style activity operating within residential communities. Short term rentals, when multiplied through leased properties, can function as de facto lodging enterprises without the same zoning, taxation, or safety oversight required of traditional hospitality businesses. This creates inequity for compliant operators while placing additional strain on municipal enforcement resources that are already limited.

Maryland municipalities are not uniform. What may function in one jurisdiction may cause significant disruption in another. Preempting local authority removes the ability of elected

officials to respond to resident concerns and adapt policy based on real world outcomes. Good governance requires flexibility, accountability, and respect for local decision making, not broad statewide limitations that overlook community level realities.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to reconsider Senate Bill 666 in its current form. At minimum, the legislation should preserve municipal authority to enact stronger local regulations or prohibitions where supported by documented community impact and public safety considerations.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross Councilwoman At Large City of Glenarden, Maryland
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