



February 22, 2021

Statement on Proposed Elimination of Short-Term Rentals in Fairhaven

On behalf of One SouthCoast Chamber and Southeastern Massachusetts Visitors Bureau, both housed at the Chamber offices at 227 Union Street, New Bedford, I write vehemently to oppose any effort to eliminate or further restrict short-term rentals from the inventory of visitor experiences in Fairhaven or anywhere within our service area. These properties, now paying state occupancy taxes as well as local real estate taxes, have become an important adjunct to the traditional hotel/motel properties that traditionally have served and continue to serve our tourism base.

As we seek to recover from a pandemic that has devastated the tourism industry and cost the loss of so many jobs in our region, we must consider the importance of the visitor experience – one that has seen a steady increase in the rental of private spaces. Of equal or perhaps even greater importance is the indirect income derived from visitors. Our grocery stores, restaurants, shops and attractions throughout the region benefit from visitors renting short-term. Often they bring pets, stay long enough to require a haircut or need a new tire, and our stores happily oblige. Visa data shows that visitors added close to \$600,000,000 to our regional economy in pre-COVID economies, much of which was spent in non- tourism traditional retail establishments.

Our hotels, restaurants and shops are in need of support now – more than ever before. Short-term rentals have been shown to have fared better than our hotel market, because people want to get away safely. We strongly encourage you to support short-term rentals as one important piece of the fabric of the tourism and visitor industry.

Rick Kidder
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