

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS
TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED IN OPPOSITION OF LD 209
“AN ACT TO PROHIBIT MUNICIPALITIES FROM
PROHIBITING SHORT TERM RENTALS”**

DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday, February 20, 2019

**Honorable Senator Ned Claxton, Honorable Representative Danny Martin
Distinguished Members of the Committee on State and Local Government:**

My name is Maureen O'Meara and I have been a municipal planner for 30+ years. I am providing testimony on behalf of the Maine Association of Planners Legislative and Policy Committee in opposition to LD 209. The Maine Association of Planners, or MAP, is an organization of over 100 members, including professional public, private, and nonprofit planners, citizen volunteers serving on local boards, and Mainers from other professions like attorneys, landscape architects, professors, and developers. Though our membership works in diverse settings, we are all dedicated to enhancing the practice of planning in Maine.

LD 209 would prohibit towns and cities from a legitimate exercise of home rule authority (1969) to regulate land uses, in this case short term rentals. Municipalities are often called upon to adapt land use regulations as our economy changes. Short term rentals are just one of the outcomes of the sharing economy. Towns are working both to protect public safety and to make a place for this type of new tourism.

Like most "new" land uses, short term rentals have the potential to both fray and reinforce the community fabric. Cities in particular are grappling with the conversion of long-term housing to more profitable short-term rentals at a time when the lack of workforce housing is constraining economic growth. In towns, operating short-term rentals in established neighborhoods can result in clashes between the rhythm of daily life and a "vacation state of mind." Short term rentals often provide a property owner with new revenue. It is easy to overlook, however, that transient guests may need enhanced public safety elements, such as provision of egress lighting or upgraded sanitary waste disposal.





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Many Maine communities are both hosting and regulating short term rentals. Why should local regulation be pre-empted, when the number of short term rentals in communities that have adopted regulations continues to grow? MAP asks you to preserve home rule authority for this newest land use.

MAP would be happy to answer any questions you may have about our testimony and would be pleased to work with the committee as it considers LD 209.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

