

October 11, 2018

Housing Committee
City of Portland

Dear Councilor Duson and Housing Committee Members

My name is Ed Pontius and for the past year my family and I have lived in our house on Cleeve Street in East Bayside.

I am providing this testimony to ask that Portland take care NOT to disrupt short-term rental opportunities that are beneficial for me and my family and for the larger community.

I am 65 years old and it's true that I did purchase our three story home in April 2017 with the intent of having some support from rental income as I cut back my work hours this coming year. I hope to have the opportunity to retire, and the current income from the Airbnb unit in our house will definitely help.

However I have more concerns than just rental income. I'm hoping in my retirement to be able to match the energy and effectiveness of my fellow volunteers working with the Citizens' Climate Lobby and Maine AllCare and other important efforts that benefit our community. One of things that having Airbnb has allowed me to do already in my first year in this home has been the flexibility to host community activities and events that I could not have hosted in a long-term rental in our home. In the past year I've regularly hosted events for Citizens' Climate Lobby, I've hosted a major event for Maine AllCare, and my house served as a major operations center for a key period last year in support of Maine's Ranked Choice Voting effort. None of this would have been possible were we to be pushed into using the space we have in our house for long-term rental only.

Nor would it have been possible for me to welcome family and friends coming to Portland, many on fixed and limited incomes, coming to visit my wife in long-term care locally for her dementia.

Please consider the economic benefit which a vibrant sharing economy supports. Please consider the interests of Portland owner-occupants, who spend the largest part of any short-term rental income here in Maine. Please allow me the flexibility and the continued opportunity to continue to support my community with the use of short-term rental in my house.

Thank you for your consideration.

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