



February 26, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor, State of Florida
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

In a recent interview with the media, you expressed support of local authority over short-term rentals in Florida. We heard your comments, and strongly support your position. The Florida League of Cities and the Florida League of Mayors believe this is a public safety issue, a zoning issue and strictly a local issue. Municipal leaders work closely with their residents and know what is best for their communities. They know what works for some cities might not work for others. Florida's cities are diverse, and we should allow that diversity to dictate how an issue as important as short-term rentals is regulated.

Even though we share the same feelings on this issue, both the House and Senate have bills proposing to preempt regulation of short-term rentals to the state. These bills fly in the face of 74% of voters who believe this issue should be handled at the local level (*St. Pete Polls survey, conducted March 2019*). This legislation also proposes that the Department of Business & Professional Regulation handle inspections and regulation of the tens of thousands of short-term rentals in Florida. We believe that DBPR is overwhelmed with its existing workload and that the Legislature's proposal to supplement staffing is inadequate. It will be impossible for an agency in Tallahassee to regulate day-to-day problems arising from commercial enterprises in residential neighborhoods throughout the state. This issue needs local oversight, local solutions and local voices.

With so much uncertainty surrounding this issue, we would like to request a meeting to discuss this issue with you further. Such a meeting will give us an opportunity to share why this issue requires local oversight and why it is so important to our members and citizens.

As we look at how best to manage short-term rentals in Florida, we must look no further than the mistakes made by Arizona where similar legislation was passed two years ago by a Republican governor and legislature. Cities were overrun with out-of-state investors buying hundreds of homes and converting them into short-term rentals. The character of communities was destroyed, forcing residents to flee from the neighborhoods they had grown to love. Due to the negative impact of that legislation, the Arizona legislature is now walking back the mistakes implemented in that bill. We believe a similar situation will happen in Florida if the current bill becomes law. In fact, it has already happened once before in Florida. In 2011, the state preempted cities from regulating short-term rentals. The fallout from that decision led to a 2014 bill that diminished the preemption. Unfortunately, it left in place language stating that cities cannot regulate short-term rentals through zoning or regulate the frequency or duration of the rentals. Now, six years later, we are asking for your support to undo the mistakes

that were made previously and help restore local authority.

Your concern that the state should not be “micromanaging vacation rentals” echoes the dialogue we hear every day from our members and the citizens they represent locally. In fact, our membership and citizen engagement on this issue are at an all-time high. We have rarely seen the passion, concern and dedication on an issue like we have with short-term rentals. Our members know that if regulation was preempted to the state, the impact on their communities would be devastating.

The Florida League of Cities and the Florida League of Mayors will continue to stay vigilant as we work collectively on this bill. We hope the Legislature hears the wisdom in your words on making this a local issue. If they choose to pass this bill, we will request your support for a veto. In the meantime, we look forward to meeting with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Isaac Salver
Council Member, Town of Bay Harbor Islands
President, Florida League of Cities



Kevin Ruane
Mayor, City of Sanibel
President, Florida League of Mayors