

March 20th, 2025

Opposition to Proposed Municipal Accommodations Tax and Short-Term Rental Bylaw

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I am writing as a taxpayer and resident of Norfolk County to **express my strong opposition** to the proposed **Municipal Accommodations Tax (MAT) and the short-term rental bylaw currently under consideration**.

I appreciate the need for municipalities to evaluate revenue sources and address housing-related concerns. However, I am concerned that these proposed measures may have **unintended consequences** for both the local economy and residents who are already contributing significantly through property taxes.

Norfolk County has built a reputation as an accessible and affordable destination. Introducing a Municipal Accommodations Tax risks making the area **less competitive compared to neighboring regions**, potentially discouraging visitors and reducing overall tourism-related spending at local businesses. It has been proposed that other geographic areas have implemented MAT and seen growth in tourism spending. Norfolk County is one of the most unique areas I have visited in southern Ontario, **and I ask you to critically assess whether Norfolk County fits within the model you are comparing**, particularly as it relates to our large, spread-out, agriculturally intensive land base.

Similarly with respect to the proposed **Short Term Rental Bylaw**, additional regulations on short-term rentals may limit flexibility for property owners and reduce the availability of accommodations that support tourism in our area. Many local operators are small-scale and play an important role in supporting the broader economy.

Furthermore, it is important to **consider how the administrative obligations associated with these policies may scale differently among operators**. For smaller, local property owners, these requirements can represent a more significant and disproportionate burden. Based on my own experience with farm housing oversight, it is not uncommon to encounter extended periods—sometimes two to four months or more—of back-and-forth in attempting to meet evolving or unclear or changing standards, only to ultimately find that the original approach was already compliant. In several cases, this process has required the involvement of paid consultants, **adding further cost and complexity**. Experiences like this raise reasonable concerns about whether additional regulatory layers will create inefficiencies and unintended costs without delivering meaningful benefits to the broader community. We are all human, and differences in interpretation alone will inevitably create additional steps.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would respectfully encourage Council to carefully evaluate these proposals and consider approaches that support economic activity while minimizing additional administrative and financial burden on local residents.

Yours Truly,
Hayden Dooney
Resident, Norfolk County - Simcoe Ward 5