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Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

Alex Dagg
Public Policy Manager, Canada
Airbnb
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alex.dagg@airbnb.com

Dear Ms. Dagg:

As representatives of our communities, we are calling for Airbnb to follow the City's rules for short-term rentals and remove the approximately 9,000 non-primary residence units from Airbnb's platform. These units are illegal. There is nothing stopping Airbnb from doing this right now – the rules are the rules, and Airbnb needs to follow them.

Over the past year, four violent shootings have occurred at properties being rented out on Airbnb across Toronto. Last week's tragic shooting at a CityPlace condo unit, which left three men dead, others injured, and a neighbourhood traumatized, is an example of a deeply disturbing trend.

In our communities of University–Rosedale, Spadina Fort–York, and Toronto Centre, the rise of Airbnb units have resulted in “ghost hotels.” These units, which are bought by investors for the express purpose of being full-time Airbnb rentals, pose safety risks to the community. At the same time, Toronto is in an affordable housing crisis. We have a record-low vacancy rate of 1%, with rents rising far beyond wages or inflation. Research shows we have lost more than 6,500 homes due to conversion to Airbnb.

In 2017, the City of Toronto approved short-term rental rules specifically to address Airbnb's impact on the safety, security, and affordability of our communities. These rules restrict Airbnb and other short-term rentals to units where the owner is the primary resident, limiting ghost hotels and returning thousands of units to our housing supply.

In November of 2019, the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal upheld the City's rules and its right to regulate short-term rentals. In commenting on the decision, the adjudicator noted that City's rules are “good planning in the public interest.” Currently, the City of Toronto is moving ahead with plans to enforce the short-term rental rules, but full implementation will take time. During the interim, Airbnb should be following the law.

Residents in our communities are angry and afraid. They want to feel safe in their home, want to know their neighbours, and want access to housing that they can afford. Stop-gap measures, such as Airbnb's recent announcement to restrict rentals for users under 25, will do little to ensure safety and livability, and are just another way for Airbnb to avoid following the rules. After this recent tragedy, we hope that Airbnb will do the right thing.

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We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Jessica Bell
MPP, University–Rosedale

Suze Morrison
MPP, Toronto Centre

Chris Glover
MPP, Spadina–Fort York

Kathrin Bohr, Lianne Miller,
Sylvia Schumacher and
MH Spence
**ABC Residents'
Association**

Ric Amis
**Parkdale Residents'
Association and West Side
Community Council**

Barbara Gough,
Martin Klein and Jack Lee
Concerned Residents

Paul Hillier
**Bathurst Quay
Neighbourhood
Association**

Paul MacLean
**Palmerston Area
Residents' Association**

Serena Purdy
**Friends of Kensington
Market**

Gail Misra
**Harbord Village Residents'
Association**

Alan O. Wong and Patricia
Aquino
**Garment District
Neighbourhood
Association**

Don Hogarth
**South Rosedale
Residents' Association**

Dr. Ralph Daley and
Pearl Quong
**Grange Community
Association**

Carolyn Johnson
**York Quay Neighbourhood
Association**

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