



NOTICE OF MOTION

TO: Council **MEETING DATE:** March 19, 2025
FROM: Mayor John Henderson
SUBJECT: Notice of Motion – Resilience and Prosperity in a Changing World – Short Term Rentals
FILE NO: 0550

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS:

1. Tourism is one of our most important industries on the Sunshine Coast, responsible for jobs, prosperity and benefits to residents
2. Our limited stock of motels and other tourist accommodations are already fully booked for the next many months, most by non-tourist users
3. Businesses have closed recently with many citing a lack of tourism as a significant impact on their decision and other businesses are seeing significant drops in their revenues
4. A key rationale for reducing the number of Short Term Rentals (“STR”) in 2023 was the expectation that such would increase the supply of affordable rental housing. This has not materialised in any meaningful way
5. Concerns regarding impacts on neighbourhoods from occupants of STRs were ultimately shown to have been few, in number, and in 2024 have been substantially mitigated by way of effective enforcement (fewer than 20 complaints were received in 2024 relating to noise and garbage)
6. The impact of tariffs and other economic challenges is real and we must do everything we can to support the wellbeing of our tourism and retail sectors.

NOW THEREFORE, I hereby move that Council:

1. Immediately pause all restrictions on Type 3 STRs in the District of Sechelt until at least March 31, 2028 (hereinafter, the “Pause”)
2. Authorize the Mayor and members of Council to immediately reach out to the Provincial Government to have them suspend their province-wide STR restrictions immediately to help local communities address the economic challenges and uncertainties faced by Sechelt and others.
3. Direct staff to report to Council not later than April 16th, 2025, identifying:
 - a. How the Pause can be implemented to allow not more than 100 Type 3 STR’s to be approved not later than April 30th, 2025, such that owners can confidently advertise for and accept bookings from that date

- b. How our bylaws and regulations can be effectively implemented to ensure compliance, including:
 - i. Having a valid business license and proof of insurance
 - ii. providing written assurance by the Owner and their representative that they will comply with all bylaws regarding noise and garbage.
 - iii. appointing a local representative who is able to respond to complaints within one hour
 - iv. perhaps give some sort of priority to owners who live on the Coast?
 - v. Identify ways to minimize the building department requirements
 - c. The anticipated costs and savings from this Pause Programme (ie. possibly an increase in staff time for bylaw enforcement, a reduction in staff costs for pursuing unlicensed operations and a reduction in STR licensing fees that will be foregone.)
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RATIONALE:

In addition to the comments in the attached, I offer:

1. These are extraordinary times and we need to respond accordingly. The attached is only one of several initiatives that I think will help out residents which I believe we should be addressing in the coming months.
2. The provincial initiative to regulate STRs needs to recognize the importance of this issue, hence my proposal that we reach out urgently to meet with the Minister and senior staff. I welcome input on whether such should be to seek an exception for us, only, or if we should seek participation from other communities who share our situation / to advocate with us.
3. The overall purpose for my Notice of Motion is to eliminate the bulk of the regulations and time required for approvals – with our experience over the last two years and a streamlined process (essentially give any applicant their license and a list of conditions and let them operate as long as they abide by our bylaws), I think we can protect the neighbours and provide some additional accommodations.
4. Given the short time frame, it would seem unlikely that we will have a “flood” of new STRs this year. It’s a lot of work for an owner to ramp up – but at least they have the option if we embrace the attached. But even a few will contribute to our economy and help Sechelt be even more welcoming to tourists.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor John Henderson