

**Submission to Law Amendments Committee**  
**RE: Bill 62 – Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act**  
**Law Amendments Hearing November 1, 2021**

From:

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My name is Amanda Knight. I am a small landlord and I am a small business owner. I own 5 properties, which consist of 13 doors in Colchester and Pictou Counties, as well, I manage properties in the Town and County of Antigonish and CBRM. I am also a small developer with a focus on “attainable” housing for areas outside of HRM.

We have all heard the one-off rent increases in the double and triple digits and the greedy landlords who are pocketing this money, but what about the majority of landlords who increase rent incrementally or haven't increased rent in years? What about the majority of landlords who do go above and beyond? I would like to share a couple of stories from my perspective as a landlord.

Prior to the rent cap being invoked, I had discussed and provided notice to one of my tenants for a \$50/mo rent increase (9% based on his current rent). He was quite amenable to having this increase plus paying his own power as his unit had been neglected by the previous landlord over the years and he recognized that in order for things to be improved, his rent would have to go up. He has lived in this unit **since 2008 with one rent increase during that time plus my proposed increase**. His unit is well under market rent, even in its dated condition.

When the rent cap came into effect, **I was only able to increase his rent by \$11/mo**. My power bill went up \$25/mo and my heating cost went up \$65/mo and this does not include the rising cost of water, maintenance, repairs or insurance. To put this in further perspective, if this tenant had received an annual 2% rent increase from the time he moved into his unit until today, his rent would have increased by \$151/mo taking him from paying \$550/mo in 2008 to \$711/mo in 2021, still well under market rent. **He currently pays \$561/mo inclusive of heat, power and water.**

In 2022, under the extended 2% rent cap, I get to increase his rent again by \$11/mo. I recently had my oil tank filled up at this property where I saw my oil cost increase from \$0.85/litre to \$1.13/litre, over a 30% increase. If oil does not exceed \$1.13/litre, my heating costs will go up over \$1300 this year while I will be able to collect just over \$130 under the extended 2% rent cap.

I have also had the opportunity to show a couple of units that became available over the past 6-8 months to prospective tenants. Another topic that is not being discussed, is the reality that people are fully aware they have been getting a deal and have been paying well under market rent for years.

I showed a property to two single moms who were paying \$600/mo for a 2 bedroom. My place was \$1100/mo for a 3 bedroom and when I asked why they were looking to leave their current home, they said the new owners were imposing too many rules that they didn't like (no kids toys on the lawn, etc...). When I asked about the jump in rent they would be paying, they both laughed and said they were getting an incredible deal where they were and did not have a concern with the \$1100/mo rent I was asking. They actually thought it was a little under market rent and they were comfortable in paying it.

Finally, I had a tenant in a property that I recently purchased who was paying \$600/mo all inclusive. When I contacted her about the rent she was paying, she too laughed at the deal she had for the past 3 years and said that \$1100/mo for her current place was market rent.

***As a landlord, we are getting hit by a 2% rent cap by the government in addition to currently subsidizing rent. There is no reason the government would ever need or want to get into supplying affordable or attainable housing, when landlords are forced to do it for them.***

No one comes to my aide when a tenant doesn't pay their rent, or damages my property or when the costs of operating a property skyrocket. No one came to me this year and said, 'Hey Amanda, you have a roof to fix for \$20k, here's a reduction in your taxes, here's a non-repayable loan or better yet, here's a guarantee your tenants will pay their rent.'

What new facts came to light that we don't know about, that caused the rent cap policy to stay in place? There's a reason why landlords didn't lobby this new government on rent control and I quote:

"Rent control has been proven time and time again that it benefits just a select few, while increasing prices overall and decreasing the quality of rentals across the board for everyone else."<sup>1</sup>

"For anyone who says that rent control is a solution to the housing crisis in this province, it's not. It's disingenuous to say that."<sup>2</sup>

End quote

Nova Scotians deserve better; that goes for tenants and landlords. I am just one of many landlords in this province who support local trades when doing repairs and maintenance to my properties and who supports the local business who supply materials to maintain my properties. I want to provide people with housing they are proud to come home too; but under the current restrictions and extended rent cap, I question the feasibility of this goal.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/province-house/when-developers-and-landlords-speak-tim-houston-listens/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/with-final-covid-19-reopening-phase-approaching-n-s-rent-cap-could-lift-soon-1.6150707>

I personally like to purchase run down properties that need some TLC. For anyone who knows me and my purchases, I like the ugliest house on the street, because I can improve it with my sweat equity. I purchased a fourplex that only had one unit tenanted as the others were damaged, dated and without power. I lived in that unit for 4 months, painting, cleaning, updating, and creating 3 beautiful units that are currently rented to people who love their home. They invite me in, they show me what they have done and they call when the slightest thing isn't working so I can take care of it before it becomes a bigger issue and cost. ***With a 2% rent cap, I have nothing left to put back into these homes.***

I don't envy the people who have decisions to be made on this topic or the ones who have made decisions so far. But let's not forget, that ***rent control only benefits the select few*** and if you take away all of the noise and look at the empirical evidence surrounding this, ***extending this 2% rent cap is going to hurt a lot more Nova Scotians than it is going to help.***

With the current divisive environment, anger and frustration, I have for the first time actually felt unsafe to work on my properties alone let alone show it to prospective tenants. The rhetoric that is perpetuated by party leaders and the media uptick on all of the greedy money hungry landlords, makes it more and more difficult to want to provide housing, let alone, clean and safe housing. If we are all being painted with the same brush, why should I continue to offer housing at all?

I would like to offer a couple of solutions that I feel need to be discussed further:

- at the very least, this rent cap needs to be increased;
- it needs to take into consideration landlords who have properties under market rent;
- it needs to take into consideration tenant income as the Province does with subsidizes rent;
- it needs to take into consideration the ever-increasing costs to run and maintain these properties, not to mention the costs to improve the properties which benefits the health and well-being of Nova Scotians overall

Thank you.