
From: Kelsey Bennett [REDACTED]
Sent: September 13, 2024 6:08 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill No 467

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To the Law Amendments Committee,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding Bill No. 467 and the proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Act and extension of the rent cap.

I am a renter, as are many of my friends and family. I signed a fixed-term lease for my current apartment in 2021 with the promise that after the first year, I could transition to a periodic lease. Despite multiple requests and three lease renewals, I am still on a fixed-term lease. While the rent cap has shielded me from major increases, earlier this spring I learned that my neighbors' fixed term leases are not being renewed simply because our landlord can charge new tenants more as they are unprotected by the rent cap. I now face the same anxiety, wondering if I will be forced out when my lease ends in early 2025.

Renting in Nova Scotia has become unbalanced and exploitative. With (approximately) over 300,000 renters and only 6,000 landlords, why do the profits of a few outweigh the basic housing rights of so many?

The amendments of this Bill do nothing for me as a renter, other than further incentivize my landlord to not renew my fixed term lease.

Everyone deserves a place to live. While many Nova Scotians have given up on the idea of home ownership, the least our government can do is strengthen protections for renters to make renting a viable, affordable, and secure option. I ask that this bill be sent back for further review and amendments, specifically:

- Closing loopholes by implementing stricter controls on fixed-term leases, similar to those seen in other provinces
- Tying the rent cap to the unit, not the tenant, with rent increases aligned with the consumer price index
- Establishing a residential tenancies compliance and enforcement unit, which would benefit both tenants and landlords

Lastly, I urge the government to prioritize significant investments in public housing and non-profit organizations to create non-market, affordable housing. 200 new public housing units is woefully inadequate, and developers of luxury condos do not need further support from the government.

While there may be no "overnight solutions" to the housing crisis, closing loopholes on fixed-term leases is a step that can be taken to bring immediate relief to thousands of renters like myself. We need action now, or more tenants will be forced out of their homes and left struggling to find housing - if they can afford it at all.

I trust the government will act in the interest of its people by prioritizing housing security over profit and taking these essential steps to protect renters across Nova Scotia.

Submitted respectfully,

Kelsey Bennett