

COMMENTS ON VIRGINIA HOUSE BILL 2271
DOLPHIN RUN CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Committee members,

My name is Regina Fletcher, and I, and my colleagues are in total support of HB 2271. I am an executive member of the Board of Directors for the Dolphin Run Condominium Association, Inc., one of the most impressive and unique condominiums in the Hampton Roads area. In this capacity, we represent over 200 Virginia Beach homeowners several of whom have rented out their condos to visitors vacationing in our amazing city for almost 50 years. Additionally, since 2001, I have held a license as a Virginia realtor, as well as being licensed in DC and Maryland and have managed both short and long-term rentals in all three jurisdictions.

Located in the heart of the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort Area, DOLPHIN RUN is a 16-story building directly parallel to the Boardwalk & ocean, consisting of 110 one-, two- and three-bedroom units, as well as 2-level penthouse suites with balconies in every unit that overlook the ocean.

DOLPHIN RUN is a Common Interest Community, and was established in 1975, as both a residential and rental facility that allows owners to live in their units and/or rent them on a long or short-term basis. We are an anomaly in the Hampton Roads area. While most condominiums refuse to allow renters, Dolphin Run gladly welcomes them to Virginia Beach. DOLPHIN RUN oversees an in-house rental management support team to provide guidance and assistance. The building has a lobby area, very similar to a hotel, to accommodate owners, guests and renters, with a front desk staff ready to warmly greet them, provide check-in and keys, as well as handle any areas of concern during our renters/guests stay.

There is historical precedence in the fact that DOLPHIN RUN has operated as an STR facility for almost 50 years, is allowed to do so in the governing documents of the organization and this fact is well known to the city, community and visitors. We say it is well-known to the city, because we also have been paying both local and state lodging taxes, and many of our renters have let the city know how much they enjoyed Virginia Beach because of DOLPHIN RUN.

Since DOLPHIN RUN is in the Oceanfront Resort area, more than 95% of its neighbors are hotels, timeshares, restaurants and businesses, that either engage in, or contribute towards, the success of STRs. Currently, more than 50% of the units in the building are rented on a short-or long-term basis and managed by either the staff or by the owner. This arrangement provides a critical means of revenue for the city, state and owner; gives families visiting our city options to stay in an oceanfront environment where they can relax, enjoy the city or watch the dolphins; it supports our owners in the upkeep and maintenance of the condominium; and it provides much needed jobs for city residents.

The restrictions placed on our owners by the current local ordinance, that requires them to limit rental contracts from two (2) in a 7-day period to one, as well as the restriction on maximum number of persons to two (2) per bedroom, instead of three (3) has already had a significant negative impact on our ability to rent our units.

Our occupancy restrictions were voted on and decided by the owners over 10 years ago and are documented in our Condominium Rules and Regulations. Our 1 bedroom has a maximum sleeping capacity of 4 persons, our 2 bedrooms sleep 6 and our 3 bedrooms sleep 8 persons. We also allow a minimum of 3 nights, as opposed to 1 rental per 7 days. These rules align with state requirements and are closely monitored by our front desk for those in the DOLPHIN RUN in-house program.

With the new restrictions currently placed upon us at the local level, a one-bedroom suite can only sleep 2 people. However, our neighboring hotel facilities, with rooms ½ the size, and no kitchen facility, are allowed to sleep 4 people in one room. They also have no limit on the amount of rentals they can have in 7 days. We see no reason to restrict an organization that has successfully managed its short term rental program for 48 years.

The Board joins with other supporters in requesting that these restrictions be removed for those properties managed by in-house realtors, as they not only have a negative impact on Virginia Beach citizens and businesses, but more importantly, on the very people that we are trying to encourage to visit our city.

Thank you for allowing me to provide our comments on this new legislation.

Sincerely,

Regina Cummings Fletcher, Secretary
BOARD of DIRECTORS

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