

From: [Jeremy Dias](#)
To: [Licensing and Standards Committee](#)
Subject: Official statement
Date: Thursday, November 16, 2017 8:36:49 AM

Dear Licensing & Standards Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's Committee meeting on the proposed short-term rental by-laws.

My name is Jeremy Dias and I am the Executive Director at Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity. We promote diversity in gender identity, gender expression, and romantic and/or sexual orientation in all its forms on a national level through services in the areas of education, health, and advocacy. This week in the City of Toronto we are running the middle school and secondary LGBTQ+ Youth Forum with constituents from each of our your communities.

Today, I would like to speak about the importance of Airbnb in creating a thriving and stronger Toronto.

In our organization's experience, Airbnb serves as a partner in addressing diverse and evolving housing needs in Toronto. For us as a charity, we struggle with the costs of accommodations at hotels for conferences and forums, and Airbnb allows Torontonians to open their homes to support our volunteers, speakers and staff to stay in town for a forum.

Airbnb and its hosts have demonstrated a commitment to our organization and to being caring neighbours in our city. Moreover, host and Airbnb (the company) have taken steps to create a safer system by including a non-discrimination pledge for welcoming guests without bias. Additionally, the company promotes [acceptance of marriage equality and other LGBTQ2S+ rights](#), made a dramatic move at last year's Super Bowl with the [#WeAccept](#) campaign, and this past summer, refused housing to white supremacists in Virginia.

Airbnb has won support from labour groups such as [Unifor](#) in Canada, and is developing programs in North America to encourage hosts to pay their cleaning staff and other workers [a living wage](#).

I welcome the City's flexible approach to allowing temporary rental of rooms, private suites and entire homes. I believe the proposed restriction to allowing short term rentals in people's primary residence addresses the policy objective the city has identified to "[Minimize negative impacts on housing affordability and availability](#);" and would not want to see this restricted further.

This approach gives people options to respond to changing lifestyles and provide temporary accommodations to family, friends and others in need. For example, through the Airbnb Open Homes program, hosts provide emergency shelter to individuals and families affected by hurricanes, forest fires, flooding, and other disasters at no cost to the guest.

I would like to note that as a housing advocate, I do not believe that Airbnb takes away from long-term rentals. Research indicates that almost all Airbnb users (and those on other platforms), that these hosts are open to short term uses of their space. Throwing away this system will NOT address the city's housing shortage, and blaming Airbnb is a problematic approach to tackling the actual challenges we have in Toronto for housing.

Do we need more affordable housing? Yes. So let's build it. But this has nothing to do with Airbnb, and the generous Torontonians who open their doors to low-income people like me who want to explore Toronto.

Flexible, fair and easy to follow regulations allow for such programs to continue and provide benefit to our diverse residents.

I look forward to answering your questions should you have any.

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- Check out our store: <https://jersvision.myshopify.com/>
- (New) *The Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention Program*: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/prevention/>
- *Ontario Educators Forums (April 25-27)*: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/oec/>
- (New) *Register NOW for The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum (May 7-11, 2018)*: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/gsa-forum/>
- *Book Free LGBTQ+ Workshops*: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/book-a-workshop-or-presentation/>
- *Sports Inclusion Program*: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/sports/>
- *Pink Agenda*: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/agenda/>

Thanks,

Mr. Jeremy Dias

(pronouns: il, lui, he, him, his)

votre directeur général | your Executive Director

Le Centre canadien de la diversité des genres & de la sexualité |

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