



# Landlord's Self-Help Centre

*A specialty legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario*

1500 - 55 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2H7

---

EX19.3.8

December 15, 2020

Toronto City Council  
Toronto City Hall  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Tower  
100 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, Ontario M5N 2N2

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

**Re: Item EX 19.3 – Policy Analysis, Potential Design and Possible Implementation of a Vacant Home Tax in Toronto**

I am writing on behalf of Landlord's Self-Help Centre regarding the policy for a Vacant Home Tax currently being considered for Toronto.

We support the concept of a Vacant Home Tax for the purpose of encouraging owners of vacant properties to rent, occupy or sell the property. However, we are concerned a VHT policy would also apply to homeowners who have previously rented a unit within the family home but choose to no longer do so.

Landlord's Self-Help Centre (LSHC) is a non-profit legal clinic mandated to assist and provide support services to the small landlord community. Our staff assists as many as 17,000 small landlords annually in all aspects of landlord and tenant relations through the delivery of general information, referrals and summary legal advice as well as the development and maintenance of a comprehensive catalogue of public legal education materials.

Small landlords comprise a significant portion of the secondary rental market, and are estimated to provide between 495,440 and 574,962 dwellings province-wide<sup>1</sup>. This rental accommodation is essential to the affordable housing landscape to bridge the gap created by the lack of purpose-built affordable rental housing. These small landlords often leverage their family home by renting a portion of it, sometimes a basement apartment or second floor flat, to generate rental income that is used to supplement the cost of home ownership.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://landlordselfhelp.com/media/LSHC-Secondary-Rental-Market-Research-Report\\_November-2016.pdf](https://landlordselfhelp.com/media/LSHC-Secondary-Rental-Market-Research-Report_November-2016.pdf)

Current provincial policies governing residential tenancies are particularly onerous for small landlords. Whether victimized by a “professional tenant” or faced with non-payment of rent, damage or disturbances, many choose not to rent again after navigating the complex legal process and suffering financial loss or emotional turmoil and remove their units from the market.

LSHC proposes an exemption for small landlords of rental units located in their principle residence from any Vacant Home Tax policy that may be implemented should the owner decide to remove the rental unit from the market.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this matter and look forward to the opportunity to provide further feedback on this important issue.

Sincerely,

**LANDLORD’S SELF-HELP CENTRE**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Wankiewicz".

Susan Wankiewicz  
Clinic Director