

Dear Minister Browne,

On behalf of County Wexford Chamber, I am writing to express our concerns about the proposed changes to planning legislation under the Short Term Letting and Tourism Bill 2025 that could have a significant impact on the Short Term Rentals (STR) sector.

Short-Term Rentals play a vital role in the tourism economy of County Wexford and the broader South East region. According to the 2023 Oxford Economics report commissioned by Airbnb:

- Airbnb activity contributed €13 million to County Wexford's GDP in 2022.
- The South East accounted for 562,000 guest nights, representing 8% of all Airbnb stays in Ireland that year.
- Of these, 137,000 guest nights were booked specifically in County Wexford.
- Visitors spent approximately €14 million in non-accommodation sectors such as retail, dining, and local attractions.

All of the above statistics highlight the significant economic value of short-term letting to our county.

The flexibility and diversity of STR accommodation options are essential, not only for leisure tourism but also for business travel. Local companies and visiting work teams rely on short-term rentals for project-based stays, seasonal work, and temporary assignments. Traditional hotel infrastructure often cannot meet these needs, particularly in rural or semi-rural areas.

We also wish to highlight that a 2023 poll of Irish Airbnb hosts found that 90% of hosts said they would not switch to long-term renting even if short-term letting were restricted. This suggests that STRs are not in direct competition with the long-term rental market, and that restricting them will not meaningfully improve housing supply.

Given the economic significance of STRs and their unique role in supporting both tourism and local enterprise, we urge policymakers to consider including practical exemptions to the proposed planning legislation to help ensure that regulations will support, not undermine, the region's economic resilience.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.