

For Immediate Release
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Halifax Regional Council slams the door on public input on \$1.2 million landlord registry

Despite Halifax Regional Municipality staff telling Mayor Mike Savage, “We haven’t spoken with landlords recently,” Halifax Regional Council overwhelmingly rejected holding a public hearing on its proposed \$1.2 million landlord registry.

A mandatory landlord registry was approved at first reading by Halifax Regional Council on Tuesday. Despite an effort by Councillors David Hendsbee and Paul Russell to schedule a public hearing at the second reading stage, all of the remaining Councillors voted against holding a public hearing.

“Many Councillors selectively target and blame those in the private sector that own and operate buildings that provide the majority of affordable rental housing in this city,” said Kevin Russell, Executive Director of the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia. “The vast majority of private sector rental housing providers pay their taxes, follow the rules and act responsibly. It is undemocratic and unfair for Halifax Regional Council to deny our right to speak.”

Russell noted that Council’s refusal to hold a public hearing also pre-empted discussion on the idea raised by Mayor Mike Savage during yesterday’s Council meeting to give rental housing providers more compliance time with the By-Law.

“IPOANS would have loved to have discussed Mayor Savage’s idea about a reasonable compliance period, but Council shut down that idea too,” added Russell.

Russell noted that unlike at City Hall, the Nova Scotia Legislature – through the Law Amendments Committee and Private and Local Bills Committee – allow all Nova Scotians to have their say. IPOANS will be contacting Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Lohr to exercise the provincial government’s right under the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to set aside the landlord registry by-law until a public hearing is held and discussion with IPOANS is held on Mayor Savage’s proposal to extend the compliance period.

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