

TESTIMONY ON HB 161

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 161. My name is Hank S. Solowiej, CPA, and I am the County Administrator in Erie County. Erie County has blossomed into a year-round tourist destination and as such, the short-term rental property market has exploded. The short-term rental market has also caused a significant budget strain on Erie County. From code enforcement to police and EMS services, the call volume related to short-term rentals has skyrocketed in the past several years. I support HB 161 because any additional funds generated by applying the sales tax to short-term rentals would help offset the cost of the law enforcement related to these short term rentals. The Sheriff Department's budget is the largest part of our General Fund and we've also seen a significant increase in costs related to hiring, recruiting, and retaining our Sheriff Deputies since 2020. Our sales tax revenue makes up over 50% of our total General Fund revenue. Broadening the sales tax base will provide greater flexibility for us to manage our budget and continue to provide needed services for residents and visitors alike. Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 161.

Hank S. Solowiej, CPA

Erie County Administrator