



Posted on: Tuesday, September 27, 2005

## Vacation rental rules need council hearing

The City Council seems to be floundering on the issue of vacation rentals.

Tomorrow a bill to create a new property tax category for "residential vacation units" will have its first reading before the council.

By itself, the the bill seems to be a worthy idea: Taxing vacation rentals as a business operating within a residential zone would generate some welcome revenue. It's also consistent with prudent land-use policy.

But that's the trouble. The bill is not by itself, but is afloat along with a plan to help the city crack down on rentals operating without a permit. There's also a proposal that would require operators of a bed-and-breakfast to secure the consent of the neighbors.

Indeed, the city seems to be sending mixed messages here. And all this confusion indicates that the city has no unified policy toward short-term rentals.

Honolulu's leaders need to figure out what they really want. If the city wants to collect taxes from vacation rentals, this suggests that politicians find them acceptable in residential neighborhoods. And if the council takes this approach, its members ought to take a look at ideas for issuing permits and enforcing tough regulations that protect the community's interests.

The industry has drafted a bill that would create a permitting system, with enforcement funded in part by collecting hefty licensing fees and fines from violators.

Bed-and-breakfast units must have management in residence, and under the new proposal, a vacation rental would similarly need to have a manager on the island, someone the neighbors could call if problems arise.

The proposal could use a fine-tuning. For example, detailed rules on noise restrictions and other issues must be clear, and the city shouldn't issue the permits until they are.

But at the very least, ideas for a regulatory system, including this one, deserve a hearing. This would enable a broader discussion of ways vacation rentals might operate legally without disrupting neighborhoods.

[Back](#)

© COPYRIGHT 2005 The Honolulu Advertiser, a division of [Gannett Co.](#) Inc.

All materials contained on this site are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of The Honolulu Advertiser. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content.