



The Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor of the City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

February 19, 2019

Mayor de Blasio,

After watching your comments last night regarding our New York community and receiving a subpoena issued by your Office of Special Enforcement, on behalf of our community of New York hosts, we feel the need to once again lay out what we believe is the path forward for home sharing in this City, one for which we have been advocating for the last five years.

Ten years ago, in a small San Francisco apartment, Airbnb was founded by two roommates who could not afford to pay the rent. In the time since, we have grown to become a global platform with listings in 191 countries and millions of hosts who have welcomed nearly half a billion guests.

But at our core, we remain a tool for economic empowerment. Our hosts earn 97 percent of what they list their homes for, which amounts to approximately \$6,288 per year for the typical host in New York City. Eighty-nine percent of our listings in New York City are outside of the hotel district in Midtown Manhattan, meaning that New Yorkers across the five boroughs have been finally able to access the benefits of the City's booming tourism economy through home sharing. And with 95 percent of our hosts recommending local shops, restaurants and stores to their guests, that opportunity has also extended to small businesses from the Bronx to Staten Island.

Amidst growing economic inequality, many New Yorkers are calling for a different approach to technological innovation that puts everyday people first -- and Airbnb's platform is designed to make that possible.

As we have grown, we have also learned the importance of working with governments that recognize the need to protect this economic opportunity, safeguard our community's rights -- including their right to privacy -- and address growing concerns around the ramifications of the 21st century economy.

To date, we have worked with more than 500 governments to develop and implement workable rules and data agreements and put in place new tools to facilitate responsible home sharing -- including Philadelphia, San Jose, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, and many more across the globe -- and have collected and remitted more than \$1 billion in local taxes, much of which has been invested back into local municipalities.

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It is no secret that we have been vocal supporters of this very approach in New York City -- in the form of comprehensive and effective regulations that provide those key protections for New York City hosts and outline clear rules for safety, tax collection, and enforcement against those who would seek to take advantage of our platform to operate illegal hotels. We have encountered intense opposition -- and yet, we remain as steadfast as ever in our commitment to work with government officials who have a seriousness of purpose when it comes to making progress toward this larger goal of achieving a regulatory framework.

No matter how long it takes, we will continue standing up for our existing and future hosts -- because establishing progressive and enforceable rules, as so many other cities have done, is important to our community.

That's why, without movement on legislation that would allow Airbnb to work in partnership with New York enforcement officials to regulate home sharing, we proactively implemented a stop-gap program of our own, as we have in some of the most housing-constrained jurisdictions. In 2016, we became the first and only home sharing platform to unilaterally institute a voluntary One Host, One Home policy, which we implemented in three US cities -- San Francisco, Portland and New York.

Since implementing One Host, One Home in New York City, we have proactively taken down more than 5,000 listings in violation of this policy. We have also realized the need to continue to improve our tools, particularly when bad actors try to find their way around them. This week alone we are removing over 40 listings that we have learned were created in violation of our policy. And when we become aware of bad actors seeking to find new and creative ways to circumvent our policy, we will continue to remove such bad actors.

But while we welcome collaboration with the City to accomplish this, we know this is not enough.

The long-term aim of One Host, One Home was always to provide a bridge to enforcement by the relevant government jurisdictions -- not a permanent policy fix. In San Francisco and Portland, these transitions are underway, with One Host, One Home evolving into an operational regulatory framework -- including a rational registration process that allows these cities to use their data on housing and residency standards to determine who is allowed to host and to identify bad actors to keep them off of the platform. In fact, these cities are evidence that, for regulatory frameworks to be truly effective, platforms like Airbnb and government must work together on enforcement and avoid unintended harm to regular citizens.

Simply put, relying on outdated rules that don't recognize the way home sharing works today shortchanges our community and the City of New York.



To know what is possible, take the example of San Francisco. Today, just one year after Airbnb and the City finished putting in place the agreed-upon framework, there are nearly 8,000 listings in San Francisco, and all are required to be registered, in compliance with the rules, and approved by the City. In fact, when this system was first launched, nearly 5,000 were removed because they did not register. Now, regular people who rely on home sharing to make ends meet are able to continue to do so and those that the City does not want on the platform are stopped. Those looking to supplement their income can host and the City is able to enforce the law directly.

We believe that New York City can and should follow suit in implementing this model. In fact, we have supported legislation in the New York State Capitol for the past three years that would do exactly that, making One Host, One Home law, creating a simple registration system that doesn't violate our hosts' privacy, allowing platforms like Airbnb to collect and remit taxes in New York, and much more.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the City to finally get this legislation across the finish line during this legislative session. In the meantime, we have also offered to work with the City to collaboratively focus enforcement efforts on weeding out large scale commercial operators who seek to circumvent our policies. And while that offer hasn't yet been accepted, we stand by it.

At the end of the day, we know that home sharing is here to stay in the Empire State, which boasted a record year of tourism in 2018 -- one that included more than 3.3 million inbound Airbnb guests, not to mention the 4.4 million New Yorkers who used Airbnb to travel. We have faced a tremendous amount of adversity so that New York's 40,000 hosts can make it here -- and rather than taking our ball and heading home, we want to find a way to play ball so that everyone can be a winner.

We hope you'll work with us to find a path that allows them to keep their doors open while closing the doors of illegal hotel operators. We look forward to sitting down once again and making that vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Lehane'.

Chris Lehane  
Head of Global Policy  
Airbnb