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COUNCILLORS' CALL ON AIRBNB TO VOLUNTARILY COMPLY WITH CITY-APPROVED RULES, A MUCH-NEEDED INTERVENTION IN MIDST OF TORONTO'S HOUSING CRISIS

New rules aim at commercial operators like “[Mary](#)” who rent 60 properties, not ordinary Airbnb hosts who advertise their *own* homes a few times a year

Toronto, ON - January 31, 2019 – Today, Toronto City Council will vote on a motion to ask the San Francisco-based multinational Airbnb to voluntarily comply with the short-term rental rules Toronto approved in 2017. This ask comes on the heels of a [report](#) released by Fairbnb Canada earlier this month, which showed that Toronto lost about 6,500 homes to Airbnb in 2018, a number that is up from the City of Toronto's own estimate of 3,200 in 2016.

“In a city that suffers from a severe affordable rental housing crisis, with 8,700 homeless Torontonians, and a tenant population of whom close to half makes less than \$40,000 a year, losing thousands of potential rental units to commercial, short-term Airbnb rentals that accommodate tourists is unconscionable,” says Bahar Shadpour from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario.

The Councillors' motion asks Airbnb to remove commercial hosts, who are draining Toronto's much needed housing supply. Ordinary residents occasionally renting out their *own* home would be unaffected by this motion.

Immediately after Toronto's Council voted in the new rules in 2017, a spokesperson for the \$31-billion corporation said that it could live with the new rules and would help to educate its hosts about the city's new regulations. Voluntary compliance by the company would result in the de-listing of over 8,200 currently non-compliant listings, out of which 6,500 entire homes could be transferred back onto Toronto's long-term housing market.

“We stand behind this motion one hundred per cent,” says Jim Woods, Unifor's National Director of Hospitality and Gaming. “We have long supported sustainable tourism and certainly welcome the de-listing of “ghost hotels” that undermine hotel workers' jobs and make it more difficult to access permanent housing.”

De-listing that many properties would not be new to Airbnb. In January 2018, the company was ordered to remove about 5,000 non-compliant listings in its hometown of San Francisco, the result of a 2016 law adopted by the Board of Supervisors requiring Airbnb to only advertise properties that were registered with the City, or else face steep penalties.

“It is time for Airbnb to address the issue of its commercial operators, individuals like “[Mary](#)” who turn homes into hotels and operate over 60 commercial properties on Airbnb's platform”, says Fairbnb Canada's researcher Thorben Wieditz.