



September 9, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael F. Doyle
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Communications
& Technology
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert E. Latta
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Communications
& Technology
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, Chairman Doyle, and Ranking Member Latta:

The Travel Technology Association (Travel Tech) opposes the *Protecting Local Authority and Neighborhoods (PLAN) Act of 2019*, a bill that would weaken a crucial internet law while unfairly targeting short-term rental platforms for the sole purpose of limiting competition for the hotel industry.

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) has been enormously important to the growth of the internet by providing legal certainty to an ever-expanding world of internet services, including social media, blogs, consumer review sites, search engines, and in the case of our members, travel and accommodations intermediaries and platforms. This legal standard has provided an environment that promotes innovation and has allowed the internet to grow and thrive over the past two decades. Absent the protections of Section 230, all internet platforms would be obligated to police and censor content under the threat of massive legal liability, destabilizing the internet as we know it, and opening up companies to endless frivolous lawsuits.

The PLAN Act would carelessly amend Section 230 by removing the preemption for user-generated content only in cases of online short-term rentals. While recent traveler trends have fostered a new generation of vacation rental travelers, platforms have also stepped up to offer innovative solutions to local concerns. Short-term rental platforms are working with municipalities every day to find reasonable and effective solutions to increase compliance, address non-compliance, and foster a short-term rental environment that works for the entire community. In fact, in many cities across America (Chicago, for example), short-term rental platforms have agreements with the city that allow platforms to share data in a way that enables the city to accomplish everything it wants without Congress having to remove critical Section 230 protections.

To take such a bold step of amending the CDA in this way, which has stood the test of time and maintains a reasonable standard for e-commerce, is completely unnecessary,

will not address any perceived problems associated with the short-term rental industry, and is just another attempt by a special interest to stifle innovation by destroying a core underpinning of the internet.

Any further amending of Section 230 of the CDA must be carefully and thoughtfully considered, not cheapened by special interests looking to secure an advantage over their perceived competition in the marketplace. I appreciate this opportunity to share our industry's perspective on the PLAN Act, and urge you and your colleagues on the committee to reject it outright.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Shur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Shur" clearly distinguishable.

Steve Shur
President
The Travel Technology Association