

HOUSE No. 2539

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Russell E. Holmes

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to hotel rooms booked online.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Russell E. Holmes</i>	<i>6th Suffolk</i>	<i>1/15/2015</i>
<i>Daniel J. Hunt</i>	<i>13th Suffolk</i>	<i>11/19/2019</i>
<i>Daniel J. Ryan</i>	<i>2nd Suffolk</i>	<i>11/19/2019</i>
<i>Daniel Cullinane</i>	<i>12th Suffolk</i>	<i>11/19/2019</i>

HOUSE No. 2539

By Mr. Holmes of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2539) of Russell E. Holmes and others relative to the room occupancy excise tax on rooms booked online. Revenue.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)

An Act relative to hotel rooms booked online.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 1 of chapter 64G of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after subsection (b) the following
3 subsection:-

4 (b1/2) "Doing business in the commonwealth", ownership or operation of a bed and
5 breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging house or motel that is located in the
6 commonwealth,

7 maintenance otherwise of a place of business in the commonwealth, the presence of an
8 employee in the commonwealth on more than a de minimis basis, solicitation in the
9 commonwealth of orders for transfer of occupancy of accommodations located in the
10 commonwealth, solicitation in the commonwealth by a reseller of a contract or other cooperative
11 arrangement with an operator with respect to accommodations located in the commonwealth,
12 inspection in the commonwealth of accommodations that may be the subject of a cooperative

13 arrangement between an operator and a reseller, or other exploitation of the market for
14 accommodations or resale of accommodations located in the commonwealth by any means
15 whatsoever, including, but not limited to, salesmen, solicitors or representatives in the
16 commonwealth, whether those salesmen, solicitors or representatives are employed by the
17 operator or reseller, by a person affiliated with the operator or the reseller by common
18 ownership, or by any other party. This definition is intended to extend the jurisdiction of the
19 commonwealth over operators and resellers to the full extent authorized by the Constitution and
20 the laws of the United States.

21 SECTION 2. Said section 1 of chapter 64G, as so appearing, is hereby further amended
22 by inserting after the word "operator", in line 49, the following words:- or the room reseller.

23 SECTION 3. Said section 1 of chapter 64G, as so appearing, is hereby further amended
24 by adding the following subsections:-

25 (k) "Room reseller" or "Reseller", any person having any right, permission, license, or
26 other authority from or through an operator to reserve or arrange transfer of occupancy of
27 accommodations the transfer of which is subject to this chapter, such that the occupant pays all
28 or a portion of the rent to the reseller. The term "Room Reseller" or "Reseller" includes,
29 but is
30 not limited to, sellers of travel packages as defined in this chapter.

31 (l) "Travel package," a room or rooms bundled with 1 or more separate components such
32 as air transportation, car rental or similar items and charged to the customer or occupant
33 for a

34 single retail price.

35 SECTION 4. Said chapter 64G of the General Laws is hereby further amended by
36 striking out section 3 as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition and inserting in place thereof the
37 following section: -

38 Section 3. An excise is hereby imposed upon the transfer of occupancy of any room or
39 rooms in a bed and breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging house, or motel in this commonwealth
40 by any operator or room reseller doing business in the commonwealth at the rate of 5 per cent of
41 the total amount of rent for each occupancy. No excise shall be imposed if the total amount of
42 rent paid by the occupant is less than \$15 per day or its equivalent. The operator or room reseller

43 shall pay the excise to the commissioner at the time provided for filing the return required
44 by

45 section 16 of chapter 62C.

46 The value of the transfer of any room or rooms bundled as part of a travel package may
47 be determined from the room reseller's books and records that are kept in the regular course of
48 business, including, but not limited to, non-tax purposes.

49 SECTION 5. Section 3A of chapter 64G of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012
50 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the first, second and third sentences and
51 inserting in place thereof the following sentences:-

52 A city or town that accepts this section may impose a local excise tax upon the transfer of
53 occupancy of any room or rooms in a bed and breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging house or
54 motel located within the city or town by any operator or room reseller at a rate up to, but not

55 exceeding, 6 per cent of the total amount of rent paid by the occupant for the occupancy, but the
56 city of Boston may impose a local excise upon the transfer of occupancy of any room in a bed
57 and breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging house or motel located within the city by any
58 operator or room reseller at the rate of up to but not exceeding 6.5 per cent of the total amount of
59 rent paid by the occupant for the occupancy. No excise shall be imposed if the total amount of
60 rent paid by the occupant is less than \$15 per day or its equivalent or if the accommodation is
61 exempt under section 2. The operator or room reseller shall pay the local excise tax imposed
62 under this section to the commissioner at the same time and in the same manner as the excise tax
63 due the commonwealth.

64 SECTION 6. Said chapter 64G of the General Laws is hereby further amended by
65 inserting after section 3A the following section:-

66 Section 3B. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, in cases in which
67 occupancy is transferred through the use of a room reseller, the application of the excise shall be
68 as follows: If the room reseller is required to register under section 6 to collect the excise, the
69 room reseller shall collect and pay to the commissioner the excise upon the amount of rent paid
70 by the occupant to the room reseller, less the amount of rent that the reseller has paid to
71 the
72 operator. Whether or not the room reseller is so registered, the operator shall collect and
73 pay to the commissioner the excise upon the amount of rent paid to the operator by the reseller or
74 the occupant.

75 No assessment shall be made against an operator on the basis of an incorrect remittance
76 of the excise under this chapter by an unaffiliated room reseller and no assessment shall be made

77 against a room reseller on the basis of an incorrect remittance of the excise under this
78 chapter by an unaffiliated operator.

79 SECTION 7. Said chapter 64G of the General Laws is hereby further amended by
80 striking out section 4 as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition and inserting in place thereof the
81 following section:-

82 Section 4. Reimbursement for the excise imposed under sections 3 and 3A shall be paid
83 by the occupant or the room reseller to the operator and by the occupant to the room reseller, as
84 the case may be, and each operator and room reseller doing business in the
85 commonwealth shall add to the rent and shall collect from the occupant or the room reseller the
86 full amount of the excise imposed, in accordance with sections 3 and 3A, and that excise shall be
87 a debt to the
88 operator or room reseller, when so added to the rent, and shall be recoverable at law in
89 the same manner as other debts.

90 SECTION 8. Said chapter 64G of the General Laws is hereby further amended by
91 striking out section 5 as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition and inserting in place thereof the
92 following section:-

93 Section 5. The amount of the excise collected by the operator or the room reseller under
94 this chapter shall be stated and charged separately from the rent and shown separately on any
95 record thereof at the time the transfer of occupancy is made, or on any evidence of the
96 transfer

97 issued or used by the operator or the room reseller. A room reseller shall not be required
98 to
99 disclose to the occupant the amount of tax charged by the operator. The reseller shall
100 represent to the occupant that the separately stated taxes charged by the reseller include taxes
101 charged by the operator.

102 SECTION 9. Said chapter 64G of the General Laws is hereby further amended by
103 striking out section 6 as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition and inserting in place thereof the
104 following section:-

105 Section 6. No person shall operate a bed and breakfast establishment, hotel, lodging
106 house or motel in this commonwealth, or do business as a room reseller in the commonwealth,
107 unless a certificate of registration has been issued to that person in accordance with section 67 of
108 chapter 62C.

109 SECTION 10. Section 7A of said chapter 64G, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition,
110 is hereby amended by inserting after the word "operator", in lines 1 and 7, the following words:-
111 or room reseller

112 SECTION 11. Said chapter 64G, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking
113 out section 7B as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition and inserting in place thereof the
114 following section:-

115 Section 7B. Every operator or room reseller who fails to pay to the commissioner any
116 sums required to be paid by this chapter shall be personally and individually liable for those
117 amounts to the commonwealth. The terms "operator" and "room reseller", as used in this section,

118 include an officer or employee of a corporation, or a member or employee of a partnership, who
119 as an officer, employee or member is under a duty to pay over the taxes imposed by this chapter.

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121 SECTION 12. Section 12 of said chapter 64G, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition,
122 is hereby amended by inserting after the word "operator", in line 5, the following words:- and
123 each room reseller

124 SECTION 13. For purposes of the convention center surcharge imposed by section 9 of
125 chapter 152 of the acts of 1997, as amended, the term "operator" shall mean "operator or room
126 reseller."

127 SECTION 14. This act shall take effect immediately upon passage.