



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0750R, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION REQUESTING CITY ADMINISTRATION TO CARRY OUT A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF A TIERED RENTAL LICENSING SYSTEM.

BY COUNCILOR HOBBS:

WHEREAS, within the city of Duluth, there are approximately 38,000 housing units; and

WHEREAS, most rental property owners take seriously their responsibility to the health and safety of renters; and

WHEREAS, approximately 40 percent of Duluthians live in the city's approximately 17,000 rental units; and

WHEREAS, as of 2018 nearly three-quarters of Duluth's housing units were at least 46 years old and a full 44 percent (approximately 16,500 units) were 76 years old or older; and

WHEREAS, a majority of rental units are located in aging buildings which are expensive to maintain, renovate, and repair; and

WHEREAS, the city of Duluth has limited resources to inspect rental properties and it is in the interest of renters and property owners to have effective, timely and thorough inspections; and

WHEREAS, most rental properties are well-maintained and meet the minimum housing code; and

WHEREAS, there are also rental properties which are well-maintained but have a few documented issues and may impact renter safety and property habitability; and

WHEREAS, there are a small group of properties that are poorly maintained, with documented issues that have an urgent impact on property habitability and renter safety.

RESOLVED, that the city council requests the administration research the feasibility of a tiered landlord licensing system and bring back recommendations for code and process changes to best protect the 40 percent of Duluthians who live in rental housing.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The city of Duluth has a rental-housing rate of 40 percent. Any change to the rental licensing system could have a substantial effect on the community. A standard universal licensing system is often not enough to regulate and promote sufficient upkeep and investment in rental properties. With an incentive or performance-based program, communities can see improvements in all housing stock, not just rental units.

A number of cities across the country are in the process of or have already implemented a system similar to the proposed tiered landlord licensing program. In the state of Minnesota, localities such as the city of Minneapolis and the city of Brooklyn Center are leaders in actualizing a tiered system and can provide helpful comparisons.

