

April 24, 2021

New York City Law Department

Division of Legal Counsel

100 Church Street

New York, NY 10007

212-356-4028

RE: Proposed Rule: Rules Governing Housing Portal for Affordable Units

Reference Number: 2021 RG 008

Rulemaking Agency: Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Dear New York City Law Department:

I am writing to express strong agreement to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on proposing a new chapter 58 of title 28 of the Rules of the City of New York “Housing Portal Rules” to implement the Act of maintaining a “Housing Portal” website. This rule is fair and relevant. It helps owners, renters, and buyers by making their jobs easier and does

not take much of their time nor results in a burden. The proposed changes could benefit users and would not cause harm to anyone, except those who do not abide by the laws. By the HPD's own calculations, the proposed rule minimizes compliance cost for the communities consistent with achieving the stated purpose of the rule.

My name is Lama AlHammad and I am a first year City & Regional Planning graduate student at Pratt Institute. As a planning student, a main priority for me is helping the public in any way, particularly with housing. A personal goal is to help others look for easier methods to find affordable housing. I recently moved from California to New York City to obtain a graduate degree. When moving to New York, I personally struggled with finding the right apartment. Unfortunately, I did not know anything about affordable housing, let alone a "Housing Portal" website where units are marketed. That would have been extremely helpful for me, and I agree that implementing the Act would help others just like it would have helped me.

The Act specifically targets users of the Housing Portal to verify that the user is indeed a lawful leaseholder or owner of an Affordable Unit. This would have a positive impact on the validity, credibility, and reputation of the HDP and its users. Many people depend on affordable housing to find a home for themselves.

The updated Housing Portal helps create more credibility with owners who have a complaint against them. As well as provides a combination of Full Unit Information, Limited Unit Information, or Offered Unit Information. Other than credibility and information, users can see both rental or for sale units on the Housing Portal.

The updated Housing Portal helps create more credibility: People trust and believe a system where they know that they can file a credible complaint alleging that an owner has violated any provision of the Act. When there is a complaint, users tend to abide by the laws more often. This brings more order to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. When determining whether a complaint is considered a violation or not, a thorough investigation will be made. Many users of the Housing Portal would feel safe to know that any complaint is investigated and taken seriously. Those who violate the conditions and do not abide by the law are punished and taken care of.

Especially after COVID-19, affordable housing is needed for a significant portion of the population. So many people have lost jobs and homes. An organized way of finding housing such as the Housing Portal would help those in need. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development offers a wide variety of programs that create newly constructed or renovated affordable rental housing throughout the five boroughs. By using city subsidies and other financing tools, these apartments are affordable to low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income individuals and families.

As I stated previously, before moving to New York City, I had no idea what affordable housing was. After learning more about Planning, I wish I had found out before I arrived in the City. To know that there is a program that helps low-income families with finding the right home for them is very comforting. I only hope that every country would learn from this type of program and the proposed Housing Portal.

Proposed Rule Suggesting HPD's Housing Portal to be upgraded Be Accepted

I strongly agree with the proposed rule, knowing that it would benefit both the public and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The upgrade to the Housing Portal would benefit many people by finding affordable apartments and bringing more people in. when people find a credible and easy way to rent apartments, they would not go anywhere else.

Sincerely,

Lama AlHammad