

From: Minister <MINISTER@housing.gov.ie>

Sent: Tuesday 24 March 2020 10:42

To: lordmayor@dublincity.ie

Subject: RE: HPLG-MO-00334-2020

24 March 2020

Mr. Tom Brabazon

lordmayor@dublincity.ie

RE: HPLG-MO-00334-2020

Dear Lord Mayor,

I have been asked by Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to refer to your correspondence in relation to introduce a two year rent freeze in Dublin.

The current rent increase restriction of 4% per annum in Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs) provides for a modest increase in revenue for accommodation providers to ensure that investment in the sector is not discouraged and that rental properties are maintained to meet minimum standards. The Government needs to continue its monitoring of existing rent certainty measures to ensure that they do not undermine our efforts to increase rental accommodation supply. The rent increase restriction only applies in the areas with the highest and fastest growing rents and takes account of the constitutionally protected property rights of accommodation providers.

It is highly likely that the proposed introduction of a rent freeze would almost certainly deter continued investment in the rental accommodation market at a time when we are seeking to increase supply yet we know, via Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) data, that landlords are leaving the market.

The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) was established under the Residential Tenancies Act in September 2004 to operate a national tenancy registration system and to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants.

Additional powers and functions were conferred on the RTB by provisions in the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) 2019 Act. The introduction of these new powers of investigation and the related sanctions regime came into effect from 1st July 2019 and the key provisions of the Act make it a criminal offence for landlords to implement rent increases that contravene the law, that do not adhere to the new definition of a substantial change in the nature of the accommodation for the purpose of an exemption from the 4% p.a. rent increase restriction, or fail to cooperate with an RTB investigation, or fail to register and update tenancies with the RTB. The Act provides powers to the RTB to investigate and administratively sanction (up to €30,000) landlords who engage in improper

conduct including non-compliance with the rent increase restriction in RPZs and allows the RTB to initiate an investigation without the need for a complaint to be made.

Further information is available at: www.rtb.ie/ and through the RTB helpline - Lo-call on 0818 30 30 37 (mobile operators might charge a premium rate to the Lo-call number) or 01 702 8100 - available from Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 6.30pm.

I wish to assure you that the Department keeps residential tenancy legislation under constant review and any necessary changes will be made.

I hope that this information is of some assistance to you. The Minister has asked me to thank you for taking the time to write to this Department with your recommendation, which has been duly noted.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh Redmond
Private Secretary