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New York Law Bans Airbnb Short-Term Rentals



Michael Nunez

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Image: Getty

If you need a place to stay while visiting New York City, you should probably start considering options besides Airbnb. Governor Andrew Cuomo approved legislation on Friday that makes it illegal to advertise short-term rentals.

New York state law currently prohibits urban apartment owners from renting units for less than 30 days if they are not present. The new law passed by state legislature would prevent advertising that violates the existing law—essentially helping regulators crack down on Airbnb listings.

Airbnb is not taking the news well. The company's head of New York public policy Josh Meltzer sent Gizmodo the following statement in an email:

In typical fashion, Albany back-room dealing rewarded a special interest — the price-gouging hotel industry — and ignored the voices of tens of thousands of New Yorkers. A majority of New Yorkers have embraced home sharing, and we will continue to fight for a smart policy solution that works for the the people, not the powerful. We are filing a lawsuit in New York this afternoon.

For what it's worth, Airbnb says that a majority of the listing in New York City are legal according to short-term regulations, and the company is not planning for this to significantly impact its hosts or guests in the state.

Still, the company will move forward with its lawsuit. According to a *Fortune* report, Airbnb will argue that the bill violates Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which prohibits legislators from sanctioning websites for content posted by its users. The company is also arguing it violates the First Amendment's freedom of speech and 14th Amendment's due process. The company argued a similar case in its hometown of San Francisco in June.

Prior to Cuomo's decision, Airbnb went to great lengths to sway public opinion. According to The Verge, the rental company spent \$10 million on a campaign intended to defeat the bill's passage. Now, it will spend even more fighting Governor Cuomo tooth-and-nail for the right to advertise short-term rentals.

[Reuters]

Michael Nunez ✉ m.nunez@gizmodo.com 🐦 [@MichaelFNunez](https://twitter.com/MichaelFNunez)

Technology editor at Gizmodo.

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