

February 6, 2013

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram, and Members of the General Law Committee:

As you may recall my company operates Planet Self Storage in Newington and we manage 3 other properties in Bridgeport and the Danbury area. As a storage operator we have an interest in Senate Bill 752 An Act Concerning Self Storage Liens. I am writing to request your continued support of this bill that will modernize the self storage lien law.

I also serve as a director and President of the Connecticut Self Storage Association (CTSSA). Unfortunately I have other commitments which prevent me from attending the hearing on Feb. 7 but wish to speak in favor of this legislation. The current law requires certified mail notices and print newspaper ads for lien sales. While this was appropriate many years ago it is no longer when there are quicker, better, more effective, and more direct methods available.

Certified mail is not effective as an average of 50% of the notices sent are returned unopened which means no official notice was received by the tenant in default. The reasons vary but include no longer at that address, refused, failed to claim, etc. There is also a stigma associated with "signing" for a notice, perhaps some feel if they don't sign nothing can happen. Certified mail is never forwarded by the postal service. It is also very expensive in terms of labor and postage, costs for the delinquents but are born by all tenants in their rents.

A better solution is a "verified" type of mail. The postal service offers a certificate of mailing which certifies who first class mail is being mailed to and when it was brought to the post office for delivery. This provides accountability and proof that a storage operator mailed the required notices. Additionally first class mail is forwarded by the postal service.

Newspapers across the nation are fast fading from the scene with many already shuttering their doors due to lack of circulation - fewer subscribers means less advertising dollars spent. Some now only publish on weekends. Today most people prefer to get their news electronically where they can select their own interests and how/when they wish to receive it.

But there are other issues with the papers which adversely affect storage operators. An apparent side effect of cut backs, it is not unusual for us to submit a carefully worded and spelled legal ad only to have errors made when typesetting by the newspaper. When this occurs we must cancel and reschedule the lien sale. This requires a new round of certified mail notices to advise of the new sale date and more expenses born by the storage operator. Finally with declining circulation it seems even less likely the delinquent tenant would see a legal ad if published in a newspaper. Another issue is the expense, a recent ad for my property in Bridgeport cost approximately \$800

just to appear twice in the paper. These same ads cost less than \$200 just a few years ago. Yet storage rents could never increase at that rate.

A much better solution is to designate a website on the rental agreement which will be the official place to publicize a lien sale. That website could be the storage property's own website or perhaps on the CTSSA web site in a publicly accessible area. If the CTSSA web site is chosen we would welcome sale postings from any CT storage operator regardless whether they are members or not. Web sites are superior to print because they can be posted, updated or corrected in minutes not days. One central web site may be a good solution for Connecticut.

I hope I have made my opinions clear but please let me know any further questions you may have.

Thank you,

Charlie Fritts, CPM

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