Host Compliance and STR Helper to Merge, Accelerating Innovation & Improving Local-Government’s Ability to Make the Sharing-Economy Work for Everyone

Merger Creates Market-Leading Company with the Financial, Engineering and Customer Support Resources Needed to Deliver the Full Suite of Data, Software and Services Governments Need to Cost-Effectively Implement and Enforce Fair and Balanced Short-term Vacation Rental Regulations

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON and AUSTIN, Texas (PRWEB) February 25, 2019 -- Host Compliance LLC (“Host Compliance”) and Bear Cloud Software LLC, doing business as “STR Helper”, leading providers of innovative technology to local governments, announced today the merger of the two companies. The merger is effective immediately, and the new company will operate under the Host Compliance banner and fully combine their operations in the coming months.

“Combined under the Host Compliance umbrella, we can draw upon our collective experience and capabilities to innovate our short-term rental compliance software and services while remaining focused on delivering outstanding technology, services and financial benefits to local governments” said Host Compliance Founder and CEO, Ulrik Binzer. “Host Compliance’s strength has traditionally been in the underlying technology and artificial intelligence that enables us to efficiently identify non-compliant short-term vacation rentals and bring them into compliance with local ordinances and tax laws. What we liked about STR Helper was their deep experience in municipal government operations including their decades of combined personal experience from serving as Mayors, City Managers, Tax Collectors and Code Enforcement Officers in communities faced with the challenges created by the rapid rise of the sharing-economy and short-term vacation rentals. The new company combines Host Compliance’s technical strengths with STR Helper’s operational insights and decades of local government experience. Ultimately, customers will benefit significantly by combining these core strengths.”

Host Compliance was founded in San Francisco in 2015 and has quickly established itself as a market leader in the short-term rental compliance sector. Founded by Ulrik Binzer, a former Airbnb host and Silicon Valley executive, the company created this new market category and quickly demonstrated it could meet local government’s needs for identifying illegal operators of short-term vacation rentals and provide the technology and services needed to automate and manage all aspects of the associated registration, permitting, code enforcement and tax collection challenges.

Currently based in Austin, TX, but originally from Garden City, UT, STR Helper was founded by former Mayor John Spuhler, former City Manager Bob Peterson, and veteran software engineer Kenny Jacobson who observed first-hand the impact of platforms like Airbnb on their vacation destination community in Utah, which explodes from a full-time population of less than 1,000 in winter to over 25,000 visitors in the peak of summer. Explains company co-founder and former Mayor John Spuhler, “We were living the problem, and given the size and explosive growth of the ‘sharing-economy’ it was obvious that other local governments also needed a scalable software solution.”

While STR Helper innovated and grew rapidly, it never found its financial footing. STR Helper CEO, John Spencer, acknowledges that “We were never properly capitalized and as a result, we were constantly
scrambling. By merging with Host Compliance, we can preserve dozens of jobs and continue to provide our customers with the stable platform and service they deserve. In addition, the combination provides us with the financial and engineering resources needed to fulfill our vision of a software platform for municipal governments around the world to manage the new economy. In many ways, this is the proverbial ‘white knight’ scenario.”

By uniting, Host Compliance and STR Helper will be able to meet evolving client needs and offer solutions, resources and expertise in ways neither company could achieve independently. Explains Host Compliance’s Founder and CEO Ulrik Binzer, “By adding STR Helper’s experienced engineering team to our dozen of existing software engineers, we will be able to more quickly expand our comprehensive product portfolio, which already today includes software to discover and identify illegal short-term rentals, manage registration and compliance, collect lodging taxes, and a call center that enables affected neighbors to easily report, and get instant resolution to, short-term rental related noise, parking and trash problems.”

From a STR Helper customer perspective there will be no immediate changes in the short term -- all customers will continue to be supported by the same people, on the same platform, and on the same terms as they currently have. In the medium and long-term the two companies will combine their customer success teams and product roadmaps to meet the joint needs of the combined customer base while ensuring that all data is preserved.

The combined companies currently service over 230 North American towns, cities and counties, including major cities such as Austin, TX; Charleston, SC; Denver, CO; Las Vegas, NV; Minneapolis, MN; Nashville, TN; Orlando, FL; Portland, ME and San Antonio, TX. In addition, the company serves hundreds of smaller communities ranging from popular tourist destinations such as Napa, CA and Vail, CO to suburbs and rural communities faced with the many positive and negative consequences of the rapid rise of the sharing-economy.

Among other benefits, the combined company will bring together the leading thinkers on the subject of short-term rental regulation and enforcement under a common roof. Explains Kent Myers, City Manager of Fredericksburg, TX, “The opportunity for us to collaborate with, and learn from, this diverse cross-section of cities and counties facing similar problems with short-term vacation rentals is really exciting for us.”

For additional details on the merger, customers and industry partners are encouraged to visit: https://hostcompliance.com/better-together

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