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Phuket up in arms on long-stay visa

BANGKOK: Phuket tourism operators oppose the government's policy allowing foreigners who buy real estate worth B3 million to qualify for a long-stay visa, arguing the investment threshold is too low and could attract 'non-quality' visitors who may engage in illegal activities, as well as risking an increase in property prices, making housing less affordable for local residents.

[property](#) [economics](#) [immigration](#)
[By Bangkok Post](#)

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Tourism operators in Phuket view the minimum property price of B3 million as too low to obtain a one-year visa. Photo: Molpasorn Shoowong / Bangkok Post

According to the Immigration Bureau, since Oct 1, 2025, foreigners who bought a condo worth a minimum of B3mn or rent housing for at least B85,000 per month are eligible to apply for a one-year long-stay visa.

Family members or dependents can also apply for a visa to stay with the buyers, reports the [Bangkok Post](#).

Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, said although Phuket has generally been less successful than cities such as Chiang Mai in attracting long-stay travellers, due to its higher cost of living, operators are concerned the new regulations would make it too easy for foreigners to acquire property in Thailand.

Mr Thaneth said the required real estate investment of 3 million baht is far too low compared with the benefits foreign buyers expect to receive, including the right to secure long-term residency.

He said their dependents are eligible to apply for stays without any additional form of investment.

"This is contrary to Thailand and Phuket's aim to secure high-quality tourists over quantity," said Mr Thaneth.

The policy leaves a loophole for foreigners to conduct illegal actions, such as working or doing business without permits, he said, or buying several condo units and renting them out to short-stay tourists.



Imbalanced foreign property ownership may also drive up housing prices across the market, as well as living costs, which would severely impact locals, said Mr Thaneth.

The visa scheme should have stricter criteria, such as higher minimum property purchase prices or requiring buyers to invest in savings or local funds in Thailand for each additional dependent applicant, he said.

According to Thailand Longstay Management, which backed the one-year long-stay visa, the measure aims to lift the property sector through foreign investors.

The company helps screen application documents for the Immigration Bureau, and insists that foreigners with criminal backgrounds will be denied long-stay visas.

Under the scheme, foreigners may buy or rent property only from Thai developers or owners.

Foreigners must comply with national property ownership rules, which stipulate foreigners cannot hold more than 49% of the ownership quota in any condo.

In some countries booming tourism and short-term property rentals have led to protests by locals, who blame them for surging housing prices.

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