

April 30, 2019

Via e-mail to:

JasonSheppard@house.mi.gov

KathyCrawford@house.mi.gov

GaryEisen@house.mi.gov

JimEllison@house.mi.gov

KaraHope@house.mi.gov

AnnBollin@house.mi.gov

SteveMarino@house.mi.gov

BradPaquette@house.mi.gov

alake@house.mi.gov

JamesLower@house.mi.gov

JulieCalley@house.mi.gov

LukeMeerman@house.mi.gov

WilliamSowerby@house.mi.gov

PadmaKuppa@house.mi.gov

LanaTheis@house.mi.gov

GaryHowell@house.mi.gov

AlexGarza@house.mi.gov

Dear Honorable Representatives and Senator,

I am writing to oppose HB 4046, which seeks to eliminate local government's ability to regulate short-term rentals (STRs). My community has been experiencing the impacts of short-term rentals (usually Airbnb and VRBO's) for several years. This particular issue is particularly prevalent in the lake areas that are very densely populated which exacerbate the impacts. Short Term Rentals can have a huge and detrimental impact on the quality of life in a neighborhood, and local government should be able to address the issues locally.

Negative impacts and unanticipated consequences to consider with completely opening up the short-term rental industry include:

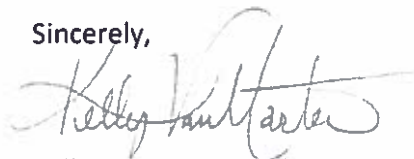
1. Eliminating local government's ability to regulate short term rentals undermines local control. Regulations should be made at the local level since every municipality is different. Local control has been foundational to governance in Michigan.
2. Quality of life for neighbors near STR's can be deleteriously affected, especially if STR's are concentrated. Increased light, noise, trash, public safety, environmental and other impacts on residential properties must be considered and prevented. I hear complaints often related to the noise of slamming car doors and jovial tourists enjoying their STR at all hours which adversely affects the quality of life for the surrounding properties. STR's can destroy the social and physical fabric of a neighborhood, and detract from the overall desirability of a communities stable neighborhoods.
3. STR's can remove housing units from the market when many communities are facing big challenges with providing enough housing, particularly affordable housing. STR's can drive up the cost of housing for existing residents, and prevent new year round residents from moving in due to property value increases.

4. Concentrations of STR's on single blocks in desirable tourist areas can completely change the environment of a residential neighborhood and replace tax paying, locally employed residents who contribute socially and economically to THEIR community with transient tourists.
5. Property owners should be able to rent out rooms in their homes to supplement income, but when a neighborhood home or apartment complex shifts completely to STR, it becomes a commercial enterprise, which if located in a residential area, should be regulated by the local unit if desired.
6. Building code requirements that apply to multi-family or rental housing are sidestepped, creating health and safety issues.
7. There is a risk of units effectively being used as illegal hotels. We have State fire, building and safety codes for hotels for good reason, and to at least some degree, they should be applied to STR's as well.

Certainly, a homeowner renting out a room in their owner occupied home would be within the spirit of a single family zoning use regulation. Renting a second home for seasonal tourism purposes, so long as the owner also spent personal recreational time at the home would also be within the spirit of what is traditionally allowable in a single-family district. But when a commercial interest purchases multiple homes with the explicit purpose of renting them on a short term basis, with an owner occupant never occupying the structure, it becomes a commercial use and should be regulated as such. I encourage you to consider the establishment of a work group to bring together stakeholders to identify solutions that allow for tourism and economic development while protecting local communities, schools, and businesses.

Please add my comments and concerns into the official committee record.

Sincerely,



Kelly VanMarter, AICP
3714 E. Coon Lake Road
Howell, MI 48843
(517) 861-7917