

DANBURY TOWNSHIP

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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March 9, 2022

The Honorable Scott Wiggam, Chair
State and Local Government Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: HB 563 – in opposition

Dear Chairman Wiggam,

Good afternoon, Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and all members of the House State & Local Government Committee. My name is Kathryn Dale, Zoning and Planning Administrator for Danbury Township in Ottawa County. I have been asked to testify today by reading a letter on behalf of the Danbury Township Board of Trustees in opposition to HB 563 which seeks to limit local regulation of short-term rental property. I will have my own letter following this.

Passage of this bill usurps the ability of our township to regulate zoning districts. Residentially, Danbury continues to be the fastest growing township in Ottawa County. We are attractive to young families, summer residents and retirees for our safe, peaceful and beautiful location. Sixty percent of the property in our township is owned by someone who doesn't live here full time. The reason for this is we are a "summer season" tourist area on Lake Erie. This sixty percent owns a second home here. They bring their family on weekends and in the summer to relax, entertain, enjoy water-related activities, visit the Lake Erie islands and support our seasonal businesses.

Zoning is no secret around here. It was voted in 47 years ago, long before probably many of you were born. It allows choices at the local level and protects our property owners. Our small township staff works diligently to safeguard the rights of its residents and to enforce zoning codes that permit all uses in their proper place. We have a huge district that permits short-term rentals. A potential homeowner may certainly choose to purchase within this district if they desire to rent their home short-term.

Permitting commercial rentals in residential districts voids our zoning law and its accompanying protection. It abolishes our right to enjoy our property. This bill will set a disastrous precedent for any commercial entity desiring a start-up in a residential area. Once you open that door, it cannot be shut. The almighty dollar will again override what all property owners expect from the American dream – the pleasure of home ownership.

When theft, vandalism, loud music, unruly people, trespassing or worse occurs because transients became bored and wanted to see what's going on next door, will help arrive quickly enough? Our limited resources and dollars allow us only two police officers on duty at any given time. With sixty percent absentee ownership there is likely no one locally to remedy associated problems with transient rentals. Who will provide us with regulation, protection and enforcement for the danger that arrives with transients who don't care about next-door neighbors and local rules because they're only here for some fun on the Lake?

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We want neighbors in our residential neighborhoods, not fly-by-night lodging businesses. We pride ourselves in maintaining a sense of community with continuity. Our quality of life is high, that is why we invested in our homes and brought our families here. We continue to pay dearly with our tax dollars to enjoy our property rights and neighborhoods.

Help protect our families by voting against this legislation. Should this pass, the basic rights of tax-paying citizens will be taken away. These are the same citizens who elected you to protect them. Ask the bill sponsors and co-sponsors what the positive aspects of this could possibly be, then do your research. Study the struggles occurring in other states before you destroy our neighborhoods too.

Put this on the ballot. Make it a local option. Just don't dictate how we should run our community. We're successful at what we do here and don't need the State to impose laws that benefit the minority while eliminating the rights of the majority.

On behalf of the Danbury Township Trustees,

Dianne M. Rozak
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