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Senate Bill 104, Short Term Rentals Senate Local Government Committee March 12, 2025

Chairwoman O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Local Government committee. My name is Kyle Brooks, and I am the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Ohio Township Association. On behalf of Ohio's 1,308 townships, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 104, Short-Term Rental (STR) regulation.

The OTA recognizes the growing popularity of short-term rentals; however, SB 104 would prevent townships from adopting or enforcing regulations that prohibit or limit short-term rental properties in any zoned area—whether residential, commercial, or agricultural. This bill would effectively strip over half of Ohio's townships of their zoning authority, a longstanding tool that has guided land use planning and community development for decades.

Zoning is a collaborative process that involves public input and is designed to balance growth, protect property values, and maintain the character of a community. The regulation of STRs is not a simple yes-or-no issue for townships. The question is not whether STRs should be allowed, but rather where and how they fit within a community. Residents have a vested interest in their neighborhoods. Boards of township trustees must have the ability to respond appropriately. SB 104 would handcuff townships from addressing community-specific issues such as noise, criminal activity, parking, density, and transient homes acting as commercial businesses in residential neighborhoods.

While we oppose the bill in its current form, we do appreciate the following two provisions being included.

Rental Registration: The bill allows for a registration process for STRs, accompanied by a \$20 fee per year per property. This registration provision will help townships know where rentals are located, which can help safety services if an emergency call happens or in the event of a nuisance complaint so that the owner may be contacted. While this is a step in the right direction, we believe this fee is insufficient to cover the administrative costs townships may incur. We recommend a higher annual fee.

Remittance of Lodging Tax: The bill requires STR platforms, such as Airbnb and VRBO, to collect and remit lodging taxes directly to the local jurisdiction where the STR is located. Under current law, townships do not receive lodging taxes from these types of businesses. The OTA supports this mechanism and views it as a positive move toward parity with traditional lodging establishments.

The OTA is committed to working with the sponsor and members of this committee to find a balance between supporting short-term rentals and preserving local control. The OTA recognizes the role STRs play in tourism and economic development here in Ohio. However, reasonable local oversight is needed. We look forward to continuing these discussions and hope to find common ground so that we may move from opposition to support.

Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you and the Senate Local Government Committee and I would be happy to answer any questions you or the committee members may have.