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March 11, 2025

Dear Chairman O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 104. I am Eric Wobser, CEO of the Greater Sandusky Partnership, representing Erie and Ottawa counties. These two counties have a combined population of just 110,000 yet welcome 12 million visits annually, representing an economic impact of over 3 billion per year.

While STRs are vital to tourism, local governments must have the ability to manage them effectively, particularly in the Greater Sandusky Region, where visitor numbers increase significantly during the summer months. SB 104, as written, creates challenges for both housing and tourism by removing local control over short-term rentals (STRs).

For example, the Greater Sandusky Partnership conducted a comprehensive housing study in 2023 that found short term rentals are contributing to housing shortages and rising home prices, making it harder for local workers to find affordable housing near employment. This exacerbates the workforce challenges faced throughout the state of Ohio.

We support extending the lodging tax to STRs statewide, but until STRs are treated equally within Ohio's tax structure, they'll continue to have an unfair advantage over traditional businesses. This was addressed in *Dakota v. Wayfair* (2018), and SB 104 would worsen the issue by exempting STRs from taxes paid by other lodging businesses.

I understand you've received a letter from Sandusky City Manager John Orzech, who shares my concerns about the bill's prohibition on local regulation of short-term rental properties. As John stated, *"The City of Sandusky is deeply concerned that SB 104 would remove our ability to regulate short-term rentals and undermine our ability to responsibly manage the balance between tourism and the needs of our residents."*

We urge the committee to consider comprehensive legislation that allows local governments to regulate STRs while balancing tourism and housing needs. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to working together to find thoughtful solutions. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Wobser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eric" and last name "Wobser" clearly visible.

Eric Wobser
Chief Executive Officer