Dear Senator O’Brien and Representative Iden:

  It  has come to my attention that there  are proposals HB4503 and SB329 being sent to committee to amend the Zoning Act, specifically the inclusion of short term rentals in the definition of a residential property which would take control away from local municipalities and bring same under the State umbrella.  This appears on the surface to be a self interested proposal on the part of the two legislative proponents who are realtors and property managers respectively and backed by the Board of Realtors.  This is an incredibly bad proposal for many reasons, many of which have been expressed to you in by other residents via e-mail to you.  She happens to live on my lake and is dealing with a different absentee “landlord” but dealing with the same problems.

I have lived  on Crooked Lake in Texas Township for 12 years.  An immediate neighbor of mine tore down an existing house and built a new one; a very nice one, I might add.  This was around 7 years ago.  She lived there with a roommate for approximately two years.  The roommate moved out.  She then decided to rent out her house mostly weekends and a few times on a weekly basis.  She did this because she could not afford to live there herself and she is making a significant profit by renting it the way she rents it.    By doing this, our family has had difficulty living in peace and enjoying our property (residence).  I can go through a litany of events that have occurred which include renters not understanding boating and general rules of operating motorized and/or non motorized equipment on the lake thereby nearly  causing collisions and injuries on the lake;  strange dogs trespassing on our property from renters;  there have been many, many loud parties (otherwise known as Bacchus revelries) lasting through the night disrupting our ability to have peace through the night.   Some of these parties involve many vehicles which clog up the street and interfere with the traffic on our road.  One party last year had 13 cars parked overnight.  These parties typically have cars  coming and going through all hours of the night.

I have talked to the owner on several occasions and, quite frankly, the standard response is call 911.  I haven’t done that because  I would be calling so often that not only is it a waste of taxpayers’ money to constantly call 911 for this kind of nonsense but the police agency would look at me as some sort of crazy person for calling all the time.  It is not my responsibility to oversee her property while she lives somewhere else.  My family feels like we are living next door to an ongoing episode of “Weekends at Bernie’s” and waiting for something tragic to happen.

  If I were to try to sell my property and the prospective buyers knew of the litany of disruptive activity going on next door, that would certainly impact the value of my property.

The various rental houses on our lake that are problematic to the residential neighbors are typically owned by absentee owners who have short term rents.  The owners that live next to an adjacent house  they own and rent are not the problem because they live there and are not going to put up with the nonsense that my family and others have had to deal with over the years. They also have longer rental periods i.e. 6 months to one year.  Texas Township would be in a much better position to address these problems than the State of Michigan.  It’s difficult dealing with local governments let alone the State government.

I find it ironic that the majority in both branches of state government preach that everything should be handled by local governments and expanding state government is not the answer to solving problems yet these proposals are antithetical to that philosophy.  Again, one can only conclude that the proponents of these bills are attempting to amend the Zoning Act for their own self interest and self gain.

If you are interested  in spending a typical weekend at our house mostly in the summer but certainly also in the fall, winter or spring to see what it’s like, you’re invited.  You can’t sit on the deck for an hour and make an assessment.  You need to stay a few days.  At the risk of imposing on my wife, I will extend that offer to you.

If you truly believe that local governments should take care of local problems, then these proposed amendments should be DOA.

Yours truly