

Comment Report

Local Government

Date: 02/28/2023

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: RM 19

Name: Susan and Rich Young

Comment: We are writing in opposition to HF296 regarding the regulation of shortterm rental properties by counties and cities, particularly those under 75,000 in population. My husband and I own and operate a shortterm rental in a renovated milking parlor on our farm in rural Johnson County. Through this experience, we have witnessed firsthand the benefits that shortterm rentals can provide in terms of income, rural and smalltown economic benefit, and a greater awareness and appreciation of all that our great state has to offer, especially to those visiting Iowa for the first time. While it is difficult to pin down an exact number, roughly half of the more than 800 visitors we have hosted over the last three years have been from out of state, including our neighboring states and those as far away as Washington, California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, and Arizona even Germany and England. Many of these visitors have told us this is their first time visiting Iowa, how much they have come to appreciate Iowa's natural beauty, and how they enjoy being able to see the stars and enjoy the peace and quiet of our Iowa countryside. What's more, many of these firsttime visitors have returned, some multiple times, and have recommended their friends and family to come visit as well. In addition to attracting tourism dollars from out of state, we also host a large number of families from cities throughout Iowa, helping to keep tourism dollars from leaving our state. Expanding the availability of shortterm rentals, especially in our smaller towns and rural communities, can be a catalyst for local economic development and, in turn, local employment. And for travelers attending community events, family reunions, weddings, holidays, and other occasions, local shortterm rentals can provide a more convenient, accommodating, and affordable lodging option than renting one or more hotel rooms in a city or town farther away. While this bill would not affect us directly due to the size of our county, we can confidently state from our experience starting up our shortterm rental that increasing bureaucracy, regulation, permits, and fees will only serve to discourage others from doing so, especially in smaller communities. In addition, the cost for cities and counties to implement and sustain these new requirements would likely far outweigh any fees they may generate. These fees would also pale in comparison to the increased tax revenue, economic activity, and property values these communities could realize by allowing and encouraging growth and innovation to occur. As such, for the betterment of our state and our rural economy, we are opposed to allowing any city or county, especially those under 75,000 in population, to implement conditional use permit, licensing, and other fees and regulations that would discourage or prohibit shortterm rentals.

Name: Sam Ingersoll

Comment: Ensuring that property owners have the freedom to do what they want to do with their properties in terms of shortterm, AirBnB, and other rentals is CRITICAL to bringing in tourists from other states. Agritourism and foodrelated tourism is growing rapidly, creating jobs and income for our communities and families. When small towns have a variety of lodging options for visitors from camp sites to apartments to whole houses those visitors shop in those towns and are more likely to buy products from Iowa when they return to their home states. I work with an organic dairy company in Eastern Iowa. Visitors to Iowa go back to NYC and Chicago and Texas, and continue to purchase our products in their home states after experiencing the Amish countryside and our products in our store here. The small

stores and farms I know can have a make or break day from just 1020 more visitors a day from out of state. For the families I know that have rentals, even a handful of visitors to a rental in a month can be so important to the family that owns the property. It can be the difference between gas and groceries. While big cities in CA may have problems with too much housing being converted to rentals, that is not the case in rural Iowa. We believe in freedom and giving our rural communities every opportunity to survive and thrive.

Name: Jenna Hammerich

Comment: I believe it is in everyone's best interest to increase lodging access and to encourage and promote a more diverse range of lodging options for visitors to our area. This supports small businesses!

Name: Ruthie Barko

Comment: Please find attached a letter outlining TechNet's concerns with HF 296. TechNet respectfully opposes this bill and asks the committee to not move it forward, due to the detrimental impacts it poses for the shortterm rental property hosts contributing to Iowa's visitor and tourism economy, the individuals who use and benefit from these services, and the platforms that connect these individuals and facilitate the user's travel experience. Please reach out with any questions.



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February 28, 2023

The Honorable Shannon Latham
Chair
Local Government Committee
Iowa State House of Representatives
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Cindy Golding
Vice Chair
Local Government Committee
Iowa State House of Representatives
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Ako Abdul-Samad
Ranking Member
Local Government Committee
Iowa State House of Representatives
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

RE: HF 296, Relating to Regulation of Short-Term Rental Properties by Counties and Cities, TechNet Oppose

Dear Chair Latham, Vice Chair Golding, Ranking Member Abdul-Samad and Members of the Local Government Committee:

I am writing on behalf of TechNet to respectfully share our concerns with HF 296 on behalf of our members and the negative impacts this bill will have on short-term rental platforms, the hosts that offer their properties on these platforms, and the consumers who use these services.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents more than five million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

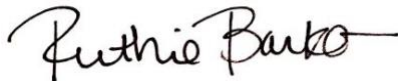
HF 269 would undermine Iowa's welcoming spirit as a leader in innovation by creating hurdles for Iowans to rent their home out to guests without the fear of a ban on short-term rentals in their communities. The bill erodes a necessary protection for the ability of residents to create passive income opportunities using one of their largest assets. As a result, Iowa's tourism industry would lose additional alternative lodging methods – thus also diminishing demand and

tourism within the state.

Establishing a statewide, uniform standard provides a reasonable statutory and regulatory framework for all of Iowa – which supports the underlying and future innovation inherent in the peer-to-peer sharing industry. Iowa property owners and its visitors benefit from the current prohibition on the unnecessary ban of short-term rentals by local government. HF 296 removes this prohibition, especially by establishing a threshold for cities and counties of at least 75,000 residents that effectively includes almost all cities and counties in the State of Iowa. For this reason, we must oppose HF 296 on behalf of our members and ask the Committee to not advance the bill.

Thank you for your engagement on this issue and for your commitment to working to protect Iowans and the innovative platforms that enrich their economy. Please reach out with any questions or further information that TechNet can provide on this matter.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruthie Barko". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ruthie Barko
Executive Director, Colorado & the Central U.S.
TechNet

Cc: Members of the House Local Government Committee