



January 2, 2026

Jason D'onofrio
comm1@hocking.oh.gov

Dear Jason,

Happy New Year! We hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful holiday season.

On behalf of the members of HHLOA and customers of HockingHills.com, we are writing to express our collective concerns regarding Draft #5 of the proposed zoning regulations for short-term rentals (STRs) in the Hocking Hills region. While Draft #5 is the current focus, the broader process undertaken by the Zoning Committee, with the assistance of Structure Point and without input from professionals in the STR industry, has led to widespread discussion and ongoing concern among local lodging owners and stakeholders.

Background

Since the initial release of the zoning drafts in Spring 2025, we have actively engaged with Audie Wykle and Commissioner Linton to share our perspectives. Our primary goal has been to foster collaboration and openness between the commission and lodging owners, ensuring that any new regulations support economic growth and prosperity for our region while establishing reasonable guidelines that protect guest safety and EMS personnel.

Concerns

Many owners have voiced their frustration with the current focus and regulatory burdens outlined in the drafts. If enacted as written, these regulations would place undue strain on small business owners, those who provide essential jobs and contribute to the vitality of our local economy. Local retailers and restaurants rely on visitors brought in by lodging businesses, as local residents alone cannot sustain these enterprises.

Community Input

In October, we hosted a Town Hall attended by over 125 lodging owners. During this event, participants shared impact statements with Mr. Wykle and Mr. Linton, highlighting how the proposed regulations could drive out small, family-owned lodging businesses. These owners have consistently paid bed taxes, followed existing rules, and prioritized guest safety. The potential consequence is the displacement of local businesses by large corporate entities, which could fundamentally alter the charm and culture of our region.



At the conclusion of the Town Hall, we restated our request for a sit-down meeting with the zoning committee. We gave clear feedback and suggested changes, highlighting that most lodging owners act responsibly and invest in their properties and community.

Requests

We respectfully request the following:

- **Collaboration:** A formal meeting with the zoning committee to discuss our concerns and proposed revisions.
- **Balanced Regulations:** Consideration of guidelines that support economic growth, protect guest safety, and are practical for small business owners.
- **Recognition of Local Impact:** Acknowledgment of the vital role that local lodging owners play in sustaining jobs, generating tax revenue, and preserving the unique character of the Hocking Hills region.

Conclusion

We are committed to working together with the commissioners to develop fair and effective regulations that benefit our community as a whole. Thank you for your attention to these concerns. We look forward to your response and to a productive dialogue at our request to not accept the Draft regulations as written and to allow us to have a voice in this important regulation.

Respectfully Submitted,

HHLOA Board - representing hundreds of lodging owners

Uma Zielinski
740-400-9141

HockingHills.com - representing hundreds of lodging owners

Finn Fuller
740-974-2398