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October 18, 2016

The Honorable Tory Rocca
Chairman, Senate Regulatory Reform Committee
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Chairman Rocca:

Recent economic studies have shown an increase in Michigan tourism. In 2014, our state hosted over 113 million visitors, which generated over \$37 billion in total business sales throughout our state's economy. Visitor spending was up 3.8% more since 2013 and all visitor sectors grew in 2014 as improving economic conditions and moderating growth in transportation costs encouraged travel. The Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council's mission is to connect people with our local attractions and in turn continue to ensure that tourism continues to be a major contributor to our state's economy. Innovative, affordable, and reliable transportation is the key to that tourism success which is why I write to you today.

Transportation Network Companies (TNC's), such as Lyft, have proven to provide tourists with easy, affordable and reliable transportation solutions while spurring local economies. Lyft recently conducted a survey and found that 78% of passengers spend more money at local businesses because of ridesharing options. For Michigan, this is essential as tourists can now spend more time in our Michigan restaurants, bars and hotels while knowing that a safe and affordable ride is available with a click of a button.

TNC's are modernizing the way people travel. Our counties of Berrien, Cass and Van Buren would only benefit from the innovative technology they provide to both drivers and passengers. TNC's make travel easier and affordable, not only for tourists but for business travelers, which is why we should welcome these companies into our state instead of overregulating them, hindering economic growth.

On behalf of the Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council and our 250 members representing local attractions, farms, shops and restaurants across Michigan, I urge your support legislation that allows for TNC's to continue their operations and growth into various communities across our state.

Sincerely,

Millicent Huminsky

Millicent Huminsky
Executive Director

cc: Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof