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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement by Trevor Tkach, President/CEO of Traverse City Tourism, regarding short term rentals**

Traverse City Tourism, the Convention and Visitors Bureau for the area, is proud to promote, publicize and sell the greater Grand Traverse region every day. Traverse City is seen as a leader in tourism excellence throughout the state and country. We are truly tourism professionals.

The recent increase in short-term rentals in the Traverse City area, encouraged by online tools such as Airbnb and VRBO, has drawn the attention of both locals and the national tourism community. What once was residential housing is now becoming transient rental space. This new opportunity for homeowners to earn extra income is an exciting proposition, and, when done properly, can be a real benefit to the community. However, if done improperly, short-term rentals can create an environment of unfair business practice and unplanned stress on neighborhoods.

Traverse City Tourism has the luxury of being connected to a vast network of tourism professionals and leaders. We have access to information regarding the pros and cons of the short-term rental phenomenon and we monitor it closely. It is important to understand that not every city, township, or even neighborhood is affected the same way by short-term rentals. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy.

As tourism professionals, we recognize that safety and security are paramount. Local hotels, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rental companies are governed by strong rules and regulations that protect their guests and the neighbors around them. In order to maintain a consistent, quality experience for tourists, everyone renting to transient guests should be aware of these guidelines and follow them.

Further, it is important to maintain the integrity and charm that makes our region so desirable. Many pre-existing transient lodging options were granted permission to do so only after rigorous examination to ensure that the business would align with the character of its surroundings. Ordinances, infrastructure, and emergency plans were designed to facilitate specific property use for the good of the owners and their neighbors – to ignore or abandon this thinking would be shortsighted.

Traverse City is a special place. As tourism professionals it is Traverse City Tourism’s responsibility to provide support and leadership on matters that affect the brand and wellbeing of the area. Short-term rentals have been and will continue to be a meaningful part of our tourism economy, but modern tourism requires that we adapt strategically for the good of our region. As we all grapple with the future of short-term rentals in our community, know that Traverse City Tourism is here to help.

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