



**Bryan K. Barnett**  
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At-Large

innovative *by* nature

December 6, 2018

Rep. Jim Lower  
Chairman, House Local Government Committee  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: Tree Ordinance Bills (SB1188-1194)

Dear Chairman Lower,

We are writing to you today in opposition to Senate Bills 1188-1194 which were recently referred to the House Local Government Committee. Rochester Hills is recognized consistently as one of the best places to live in America for offering a thriving commercial segment as well as providing a park-like setting for the community that increases residential demand. In order to help provide this atmosphere to our residents we have had a tree ordinance in place since 1988. The proposed bills will eliminate our local control of this issue on commercial and industrial property.

Our ordinance has never been controversial and resulted in over 10,000 trees being planted in our community. As a result of Rochester Hills' forestry program, we have been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation for 28 years as a "Tree City USA". Furthermore, our city's land development process is highly effective and has consistently resulted in well used greenspace and parklands, reduced use of underground infrastructure for managing rain water, and high quality real estate development. Trees are a vital part of this success.

We also have a thriving business environment, being ranked by Verizon Business report in 2018 as one of the top ten small cities in the nation to start a small business. Small businesses value a community that maintains a balance of commercial interests and natural resources.

As you can imagine, our commitment to providing an award winning place to live, work, and raise a family, hinges on managing our natural resources. We are deeply concerned about Senate Bills 1188-1194 hurting our ability to appropriately manage development going forward. The fears about these type of ordinances being misused are valid, but we should not throw out decades of efforts throughout the whole State based on a few rare cases of disputes in other communities.

Due to the short timelines this bill faces with the legislative process, we are urging you to hold off moving this legislation until the best way to regulate tree ordinances can be more fully understood. The successful planning and zoning processes we have relied on for decades could be unwittingly undone.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions you may have about the city and how an effective ordinance operates.

Sincerely,

Bryan K. Barnett, Mayor

CC: Michigan House Local Government Committee Members