

Jason Levandoski



July 27, 2026

Village of Lake Orion Council
c/o Village Clerk and Village Manager
21 East Church Street
Lake Orion, MI 48362

Re: Formal Opposition to Proposed Amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 13.11(E) – Accessory Mechanical Units

Dear Village Council Members:

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed amendments to Section 13.11(E) of the Village of Lake Orion Zoning Ordinance regarding Accessory Mechanical Units (standby generators and related equipment). These amendments were recommended by the Planning Commission on July 6, 2026, and have not yet been adopted by the Village Council.

The current standards—including the measurable 55 dB noise limit and the 10-foot setback from windows on adjacent dwellings—have been part of the Village’s Zoning Ordinance since at least the comprehensive update adopted in 2010. For more than fifteen years these provisions remained in place without significant challenge, widespread non-compliance, or documented enforcement failure. The standards provided clear, objective, and predictable rules for both property owners and neighboring residents.

The only substantial pressure to alter these long-standing rules arose after a specific generator installation at 146 Bellevue Avenue that began without a permit and subsequently became the subject of code-enforcement action. Changing a fifteen-year-old ordinance primarily in response to one installation risks creating the appearance that the rules are being rewritten to accommodate a particular property rather than to serve the broader public interest.

Of particular concern is the proposed elimination of the measurable noise standard. An objective decibel limit, even if adjusted to a more achievable level such as 65 dB measured at the property line or at 10 feet (whichever is greater), provides clarity for installers, inspectors, and neighbors. Replacing it with a purely subjective nuisance standard shifts the burden onto residents to prove a disturbance after the fact and makes consistent enforcement far more difficult. Many Michigan communities successfully maintain measurable noise limits for mechanical equipment; Lake Orion need not abandon objectivity.

I also note that the Planning Commission’s consideration of these amendments involved a sitting Commissioner who had a direct personal interest in the outcome of the noise standard. Although that Commissioner was ultimately recused, the sequence of events—appointment, near-simultaneous permit activity, and active advocacy for weakening the very standard affecting that permit—has undermined public confidence in the impartiality of the process. The Village should be especially careful when amending a long-standing ordinance under these circumstances.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully request that the Village Council:

1. Decline to adopt any amendment that eliminates a measurable noise standard for accessory mechanical units;
2. Retain the 10-foot setback requirement from all windows on adjacent dwellings;
3. If any adjustment to the noise limit is deemed necessary, adopt a clear, measurable alternative (for example, 65 dB at the property line or at 10 feet, whichever is greater) rather than removing objectivity entirely; and
4. Direct staff to develop clear measurement protocols so that setback and noise standards can be applied consistently and fairly.

The current ordinance has protected residents in Lake Orion's close-proximity neighborhoods for fifteen years. It should not be weakened lightly or in a manner that appears driven by a single installation. I urge the Council to preserve measurable, enforceable standards that serve the entire community.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter. I am available to provide any additional information the Council may require.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Levandoski



Michigan Communities Maintaining Measurable Noise Standards for Mechanical Equipment / Standby Generators

Prepared in support of formal opposition to proposed amendments to Village of Lake Orion Zoning Ordinance Section 13.11(E).

The following table summarizes selected Michigan communities that continue to use objective, measurable decibel (dB) limits for generators, air-conditioning equipment, or other mechanical equipment. These examples demonstrate that measurable standards remain practical and enforceable across a range of community sizes and settings.

Community	Noise Standard	Notes / Measurement Point
Bloomfield Township	70 dB(A) at 25 ft or property line	Testing under load required during permitting; abatement required if exceeded; weekly testing limited to daytime hours
Highland Park	65 dB maximum at property line	Explicit zoning standard for generators; 6-ft minimum setback from property line also required
Livonia	60 dB(A) residential (day); lower at night	General noise ordinance applies to mechanical equipment; measured at or beyond property boundary
Bloomfield Hills	65 dB(A) at property line (typical for mechanical)	Applies to generators and air-conditioning units; measurable limit retained
Macomb Township	Time-based: ~60 dB day / 55 dB evening / 45 dB night	Residential districts; measured at property line; recently updated standards
Dearborn	Must comply with residential decibel standards	Applies during testing (except actual emergencies); measurable limits enforced
Genoa Township	60 dB(A) at property line (certain uses)	Includes standards for mechanical equipment and generators
Westland	65 dB referenced in generator requirements	Has used 65 dB in permitting materials for mechanical equipment
Ossineke Township	65 dB(A) threshold	Uses 65 dB as a key reference in noise standards
Berkley	Testing time limits + screening	Testing limited to weekdays 9 AM–6 PM; requires screening of equipment
Farmington Hills	Noise ordinance with dB thresholds	Applies to generators and permanent mechanical equipment
Troy	Noise standards for mechanical equipment	Requires compliance with city noise ordinance; measurable limits used
Rochester Hills	Time and dB-based noise rules	Includes standards for residential mechanical equipment
Royal Oak	Noise ordinance with measurable limits	Enforces standards for permanent installations
Canton Township	General noise + mechanical equipment rules	Enforces standards through permitting and complaint process
Plymouth Township	Noise limits for exterior equipment	Requires screening and reasonable noise levels

Key Observations

1. Measurable standards are common. Many Michigan communities successfully maintain objective dB limits in the 60–70 dB range for generators and mechanical equipment.
2. Property-line measurement is frequent. Several communities measure at the property line rather than solely at a fixed distance from the unit. This prevents the standard from being undermined by placing equipment directly on the lot line.
3. Testing under load is used. Bloomfield Township, for example, requires noise testing of the generator under load as part of the permitting process and prohibits operation until compliance is confirmed.
4. Abatement is required when limits are exceeded. Communities that retain measurable standards typically require sound-abatement measures (screening, barriers, or enclosure) when the limit cannot otherwise be met.
5. Elimination of objectivity is the outlier. Removing a measurable standard entirely and relying solely on a subjective nuisance complaint process is less common among peer communities that have addressed generator noise.

Conclusion

Lake Orion's existing 55 dB standard has been in place for more than fifteen years. While an adjustment to a more achievable but still measurable limit (for example, 65 dB at the property line or at 10 feet, whichever is greater) may be reasonable, complete elimination of an objective noise standard would place Lake Orion outside the practice of many comparable Michigan communities and would weaken protection for residents in close-proximity neighborhoods.

