



March 22, 2022

Re: City comments on SF 3259 (“Legalizing Affordable Housing Act”)

Dear Members of the Senate Local Government Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Metro Cities, and Municipal Legislative Commission oppose SF 3259. Cities are concerned with the bill’s broad preemption of city land use and zoning authorities, particularly as they are unlikely to address important housing issues across Minnesota.

Housing is a statewide issue, and the best way to ensure that housing issues in the Metro area and greater Minnesota are adequately addressed is to approach statewide solutions to housing in a comprehensive way that: (1) address the full housing spectrum, (2) support local innovation, (3) provide incentives instead of mandates, and (4) provide community-specific solutions throughout Minnesota.

SF 3259 unfortunately falls short of a comprehensive approach and does not guarantee housing affordability or more affordable housing. Instead, it preempts city zoning and land use authority. As you know, zoning is an important planning tool that benefits communities economically and socially, improves health and wellness, and helps conserve the environment ([Zoning: Why It’s Important](#)). This bill would limit this beneficial tool by:

- No matter the reason – such as energy efficiency – prohibiting cities from conditioning any approvals on material, design, or other conditions if not currently required by the State Building Code (which is meant to be a minimum safety standard)
- Requiring automatic approval of building permits when delay is outside of city control, thus endangering the health and safety of residents
- And more

Thank you for consideration of our concerns. We look forward to working with Sen. Draheim and other legislators to address housing challenges in cities across the state.

Sincerely,

Irene Kao
League of Minnesota Cities

Cap O’Rourke
Minnesota Association of Small Cities

Elizabeth Wefel
Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

Daniel Lightfoot
League of Minnesota Cities

Tom Poul
Municipal Legislative Commission

Patricia Nauman
Metro Cities

Charlie Vander Aarde
Metro Cities