



March 5, 2024

Dear Chair Port and Members of the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee,

Metro Cities appreciates the opportunity to comment on provisions in SF 3080 - Draheim that are specific to metropolitan cities.

Metro Cities has concerns about provisions that would obstruct existing metro-specific processes that ensure the orderly growth of the region and regional infrastructure to serve this growth. Existing regional requirements in state law give the Metropolitan Council authority to address regional infrastructure, while allowing municipalities to remain largely self-determining with respect to local density and land uses. Regional and local coordination is required and practiced across the scope of regional policy setting.

While city officials and the Metropolitan Council at times disagree, generally they work successfully toward the shared interest of ensuring regional infrastructure such as wastewater and transit is adequately provided to residents and businesses, who pay the costs of the infrastructure. Cities and the Metropolitan Council also coordinate on land use policies to address needs for new affordable housing. Metro Cities supports this coordination as well as local appeals in the setting of regional requirements.

Every ten years, cities in the metropolitan region are required to submit local comprehensive plan updates to the Metropolitan Council to ensure the compatibility of local plans with regional systems. SF 3080 would require that official local fiscal tools and controls be at once and entirely consistent with all identified uses in a local plan, effectually disallowing staging of developments and many existing land uses. This requirement is inconsistent with the objectives of long-term planning and ignores local fiscal capacities, existing land uses and community input that inform local plans and the timing of developments. As such, the bill would require cities and taxpayers in the metropolitan region to prematurely address and pay for infrastructure to serve growth that has not yet occurred and may not be expected to occur for years down the road.

SF 3080 restricts city eligibility for regional grant programs, by stipulating only parcels zoned for multifamily housing qualify for a metropolitan city's affordable housing goals under grant programs. Metro Cities supports flexible and accessible programs to help meet local needs for affordable housing.

SF 3080 would impose a metropolitan area zoning policy and preempt local density setting. This mandate would negate local community characteristics that inform density requirements in the region, and would put significant and premature cost obligations on cities and taxpayers.

SF 3080 would require that certain communities be charged a higher level of SAC (sewer availability charge) based on their location in the region. SAC is structured as a local user fee calculated on current and projected use of the regional wastewater system. Metro Cities policies oppose using the SAC charge to subsidize state goals and objectives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on provisions in SF 3080 - Draheim that are specifically consequential for cities in the seven-county metropolitan region.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Nauman", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Patricia Nauman
Executive Director