



March 7, 2024

Re: SF 4601 – Emergency shelter facilities required to be authorized in all areas except residential or agricultural.

Chair Port and members of the Senate Housing and Preventing Homelessness Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the opportunity to comment on the city concerns with SF 4601 (Boldon). Providing solutions and adequate resources to address housing instability and homelessness is a goal that is shared by Minnesota cities and cities continue to work diligently to address this important issue. However, given the concerns described below we are unable to support the bill at this time.

SF 4601 creates a number of questions and concerns for cities, primarily around local land use planning and zoning authorities and how they are used to balance land use desires of all residents and property owners and to preserve city ability to protect public health, safety, and welfare. In its current form, SF 4601 significantly oversimplifies how cities help site and support emergency shelter facilities and does not seem to address the wide range of emergency housing types that exist in cities across the state.

The current language in SF 4601 as amended includes a definition of emergency housing facilities that is far too broad and includes no reference to minimum requirements under the State Building Code for emergency housing facilities that identify access to water and sewer, bathroom fixtures and other minimum requirements. The bill language also does not reference any parameters around number of emergency housing units on site and seems to encompass all possible types of emergency housing facilities, which vary widely and shape how cities ensure the health safe safety and welfare of residents in emergency housing based on the type and location of the emergency housing.

Additionally, the bill language allows emergency housing to be authorized by right without discretionary approval, which would completely remove the ability of a city in some scenarios to protect against emergency housing being proposed in areas not suitable for that particular use such as next to heavy industrial and other areas.

Cities and their local partners continue to work diligently to provide adequate emergency housing facilities in communities to support unhoused residents in our cities. We look forward to continuing to work with Senator Boldon and members of this committee in the provision of policies and resources that help support local efforts in addressing housing instability and homelessness in our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Lightfoot". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" being more prominent.

Daniel Lightfoot
Intergovernmental Relations Representative
League of Minnesota Cities