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March 6, 2024

To: Chair Port & Members of the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee

Re: Support for SF4601

Dear Chair Port, Vice Chair Boldon and Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee Members,

Agate Housing and Services is writing in support of SF4601 which states that a municipality shall not enact, amend, or enforce a zoning ordinance that prohibits emergency shelters, except in areas zoned as residential or agricultural.

SF4601 will ensure that last year's significant shelter capital investments will be used as quickly as possible to the benefit people experiencing unsheltered homelessness across the state. Emergency shelter saves lives. Agate's outreach workers are seeing a continuing rise in unsheltered homelessness. Our shelters remain full. Unsheltered homelessness is a statewide challenge, and many communities share our story.

There are many communities throughout the state that lack safe and effective shelter options. SF4601 will help providers to build shelters in places that will increase their effectiveness and make it easier for people to get help in the community of their own choice.

We are heartened to see this forward-thinking legislation. SF4601 is an essential bill that will speed up construction and open shelters. Zoning battles drain small nonprofits of resources and can prevent shelters from opening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Hanson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kyle Hanson
Executive Director
Agate Housing and Services