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CIRCLE PINES

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April 29, 2025

The Honorable Tou Xiong
Chair, State and Local Government Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3203
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Opposition to SF 2229 – Legislative Overreach into Local Land Use Authority

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Circle Pines City Council, I am writing to express our strong opposition to SF 2229, as amended.

While we recognize the urgency of addressing Minnesota's housing challenges, SF 2229 represents a significant and unwarranted intrusion into local government authority. The bill would severely restrict the ability of cities and counties to manage residential development in ways that reflect the unique needs, values, and infrastructure realities of their communities.

Among its many concerning provisions, the bill would:

- **Prohibit local governments** from requiring homeowners associations when necessary to manage private infrastructure and shared amenities.
- **Eliminate reasonable local design standards**, limiting communities' ability to require even basic architectural features beyond the State Building Code and undermining development quality and cohesion.
- **Strip cities of the ability to require adequate off-street parking**, disregarding the needs of suburban, exurban, and rural communities where transit options remain extremely limited.
- **Mandate administrative approvals without meaningful local input or discretion**, reducing residents' opportunities to engage in decisions affecting the character and future of their neighborhoods.

SF 2229 imposes a one-size-fits-all approach to complex planning decisions. What may suit large, transit-rich urban cores is ill-suited to small suburban communities like Circle Pines, where car dependency, and limited transit access present very different challenges.

Moreover, the bill fails to ensure that new housing produced under these deregulations will be affordable. Nowhere does SF 2229 require or even incentivize affordability for working families, seniors, or first-time homebuyers. Instead, it risks prioritizing developer and builder profits over the creation of truly affordable housing. A more effective path forward would be to partner with cities to address the true barriers to housing production: rising construction costs, limited financing options, and aging infrastructure.

The City of Circle Pines strongly urges you to oppose SF 2229. We remain committed to working collaboratively toward real solutions that increase housing options while preserving the vital role of local decision-making.

Sincerely,

Patrick Antonen
City Administrator
City of Circle Pines