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Dear Members of the State and Local Government Committee:

I am writing to you ahead of the committee meeting scheduled for May 1, 2025, at which SF 2229 will be considered. As both the city administrator and zoning administrator for the City of Lanesboro, I am expressing concern with the SF 2229 language that would significantly restrict local decision-making authority to all types of residential development in Minnesota cities.

Concerns over SF 2229 extend to several key points:

- The bill's language, if advanced by the committee and passed into state law, would apply to cities regardless of their size, resources, or level of development. A one-size-fits-all approach to Minnesota cities is not the best approach to governance in the context of residential development. Furthermore, this bill removes local flexibility, replacing local decision-making authority with state mandates. Our local officials know our communities best, and thus policy creation for zoning is best done at the local level to ensure the needs of residential development are met and policies are applicable to each community's unique housing needs.
- The language prohibits cities from requiring exactions, dedications, or fees, which could eliminate a city's authority to assess park dedication fees, considerations for greenspace, water and sewer fees, and other potential development-related fees.
- Limitations on parking requirements statewide to no more than one space per unit will result in under-parked developments that will force more cars onto streets that are not designed for a high density of on-street parking and will create challenges for our city's public works department.
- Prohibiting cities from requiring certain services, features, or common areas to be managed by a HOA would allow developers to shift responsibility for privately intended infrastructure to the city. This would make it public and funded by taxpayers.
- Language would prohibit reasonable design standards for all residential developments including large multi-family or mixed-use buildings that cities utilize to ensure compatibility with the existing environment. Some of these aspects include building orientation, transparency requirements for pedestrian and transit-oriented design, and other elements.

Because of the concerns listed above, I encourage members of the committee to be diligent in considering blanket language to apply to cities without acknowledging the unique planning and zoning needs, circumstances, and context that apply to individual communities. As previously mentioned, our local officials know the needs of our communities best and should be entrusted with creating and modifying the residential zoning regulations of our cities. I do not support the proposed language of SF 2229.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mitchell Walbridge

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Zoning Administrator
City of Lanesboro, Minnesota