



Building homes, community, and hope.

4 March 2025

To: Members of the Senate Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee

Re: SF1711 Workforce & Affordable Homeownership Development; SF1610 First Generation Down Payment Assistance; SF1533 Homeownership Education, Counseling, & Training

Dear Chair Port and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota's (Habitat Minnesota) support of critical homeownership investments. Habitat Minnesota is a statewide support organization that provides training, technical assistance, lending, grants, and other support to the 24 local Habitat affiliates in Minnesota. These affiliates serve as developers, lenders, and homeowner counselors, working in 59 counties across the state.

There is a critical shortage of affordable homeownership opportunities across Minnesota that exacerbates wealth disparities, economic inequality, and workforce instability. The below programs support production, preparation and access to affordable homeownership for Minnesotans across the state:

- **SF1711 Workforce & Affordable Homeownership Development:** This targets local housing needs and would support the creation of a pipeline of projects around the state, increasing workforce and affordable homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. It is the only program in Minnesota that is devoted entirely to creating new affordable homeownership units.
- **SF1610 First Generation Down Payment Assistance:** This fund launched in June 2024, is helping to reduce Minnesota's racial homeownership gap - one of the worst such gaps in the country. It supports first-generation homebuyers, providing 10 percent of the purchase price (up to \$32K through) CDFIs and nonprofit lenders.
- **SF1533 Homeownership Education, Counseling, and Training (HECAT):** HECAT provides financial support to eligible nonprofit organizations and governmental entities to deliver homeownership preparation, including financial coaching, pre-purchase counseling, homebuyer education, and foreclosure prevention assistance.

Without sustained investment, these critical homeownership programs face a severe funding shortfall, which would significantly reduce affordable homeownership production and preparation in Minnesota. Support increased investment to ensure strong, stable communities across the state.

Thank you for championing homeownership investments, we look forward to continue partnering on our shared goal of a Minnesota where everyone has a safe and stable place to call home. Please reach out to myself or Jeru Gobeze (jeru.gobeze@habitatminnesota.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cristen Incitti".

Cristen Incitti, President & CEO
Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota
cristen.incitti@habitatminnesota.org