



March 13, 2025

RE: SF1750 Common Interest Communities/Homeowner Associations Modifications

Dear Chair Port and Members of the Committee,

At Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, our mission is to create, preserve, and promote affordable homeownership. In my role as Homeowner Engagement Manager, I lead a dedicated team focused on preparing homeowners to be successful long-term. Over the years, we've worked with homeowners across more than 60 different HOAs. Part of our role includes helping homeowners navigate their relationships with these associations. As we've seen firsthand, challenges with HOAs have increased, placing a growing strain on our team. What was meant to be a small aspect of our work has now become a central responsibility. This shift has limited our ability to focus on other mission-driven areas and has highlighted the need for reform in how HOAs are regulated and overseen.

Our team is frequently notified of issues that could be addressed with the reforms proposed in this bill. For example, some of our homeowners live in HOAs where the board doesn't meet, leaving them unsure of what to expect or what is required of them. Residents who wish to engage with HOAs—either as homeowners or board members—often encounter barriers to participation. We've seen HOAs pursue foreclosure for minor infractions, providing only limited communication. In some cases, HOAs operate in neighborhoods with insufficient density to function effectively, and in many cases, we see associations that lack the training or support needed to ensure financial sustainability.

These issues are not just disheartening to us but deeply concerning. When we encounter so many residents dissatisfied with their HOA's practices, or fearful that those practices might jeopardize their ability to stay in their homes, it's clear that reform is necessary. My support of this bill is grounded in a desire to see an environment that is functional and sustainable for both residents and HOAs. While I understand there are concerns about the potential, unintended consequences of this bill, I urge the committee to also consider the *very real* challenges we currently face on a daily basis.

Currently, Common Interest Communities function like governments, providing important benefits to their communities. However, they lack the necessary checks and balances that we expect from formal governmental structures. By providing more reasonable consumer protections and improving transparency, this bill presents a clear opportunity to improve the environment for both homeowners and HOAs. By establishing clearer regulations, we can help board members better understand their responsibilities, create and standardize best practices, and ensure proper oversight to identify emerging trends. Additionally, these reforms will make it easier for residents to participate in their HOA boards, ensuring associations are more inclusive and accessible.

I am grateful for the committee's consideration of this important issue, and I strongly support the reforms outlined in this bill. Thank you for your time and your commitment to improving the housing landscape for all Minnesotans.

Jenny Sanford, Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity