



March 20, 2025

RE: SF1063 Common interest community ombudsperson creation

Dear Chair Latz and Members of the Committee,

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity is glad to support SF 1063, which is aligned with our mission to preserve and produce opportunities for affordable homeownership throughout the metro area. Our organization works to advance homeownership through various means, from the development of new units to supporting homeowners even after they've purchased their first home. This can look like post-purchase training on home maintenance skills, helping homeowners engage with their new community, or foreclosure prevention counseling. Oftentimes, it also means helping homeowners navigate their relationships with HOAs. Over the years, we've worked with homeowners across over 60 different HOAs and have become very familiar with the challenges and complexities of this environment, and aware of the need for better regulation.

The current regulations surrounding HOAs lack clarity, transparency, and accountability, and we frequently encounter cases without proper means to resolve disputes. We believe the creation of an ombudsperson and a registry will be incredibly beneficial to both residents and HOAs, and look forward to the improvements it can provide to this landscape. Having a qualified, neutral third party can play a key role in resolving disputes, ensuring both homeowners and boards understand their rights and responsibilities, and providing a transparent mechanism for tracking complaints and identifying systemic issues. This will be beneficial for understanding trends and informing policy priorities in the future. While we recognize this bill alone cannot solve all the challenges homeowners face with HOAs, it represents a crucial first step, and we believe it will complement and increase the success of other reforms being pursued to improve this issue.

We believe homeownership is the foundation for strong families and resilient communities. Achieving this goal doesn't end with the purchase of a home, and part of homeownership preservation means ensuring buyers can stay in their homes long term and feel welcomed in their communities. We have seen homeowners have this jeopardized by HOAs that pursue foreclosure for minor violations, or due to the practices of their boards that inhibit their ability to participate in their neighborhood. When this happens as often as it does, we know it's time for change.

I appreciate your consideration of this issue and strongly support the recommendations outlined in this bill. Thank you for your efforts to improve this environment and ensure every Minnesotan feels empowered in their home.

Sincerely,

Eva Goldfarb
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity