

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Members of the Construction Codes Advisory Council,

I am writing to recognize and thank the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry and its Construction Codes Advisory Council for the innovative approach taken with the technical review of legislation in advance of the 2022 Legislative Session. This was a helpful approach to address the topic of reducing barriers to the production of new, affordable starter homes, which our state desperately needs.

Comprehensive housing reform is the central focus of the Legislative Commission on Housing Affordability and the provisions under review have bipartisan support. This focus on increasing housing access and affordability is needed. By nearly every important metric, the status quo housing policies of this state are failing Minnesotans:

- Minnesota has the highest new home costs in the Midwest.
- The Twin Cities has the lowest available inventory of any major market in the nation.
- The homeownership gap for communities of color is the widest here in the country.

Fixing housing in Minnesota is not possible without reimagining our state's housing policies and our development approval processes. This was one of the central recommendations of the 2018 Minnesota Housing Task Force formed by then-Gov. Mark Dayton. Across the nation, state legislatures, including our own, are looking at ways to increase housing access and affordability by breaking down the barriers to desperately-needed new housing construction.

The unfortunate reality is that in the fastest growing communities in our state, a modest, new starter home cannot be built at affordable price points. In fact, in some of these communities, due to regulatory impediments, it cannot be built at all. Yet we see these same homes being built across the Midwest.

Only by working together can the housing industry and its government partners reduce these barriers and return needed starter homes to our housing market. Thank you again for your positive contributions to this effort.

Sincerely,



David Siegel
Executive Director

cc:

Commissioner Roslyn Robertson
Sen. Rich Draheim
Sen. Mark Koran
Rep. Steve Elkins

