

March 15, 2021

Chair Ecklund  
409 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Keeler  
431 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155



**Re: BAM's opposition to HF1402 (Keeler) – Border Cities Footing Requirements**

Chair Ecklund and Representative Keeler and Members of the Labor, Industry, Veterans, and Military Affairs Finance & Policy Committee:

The Builders Association of Minnesota (BAM) appreciates the opportunity to share comments on behalf of our membership of nearly 1600 builders, remodelers, developers, subcontractors, suppliers, realtors, financial institutions, and other industry related businesses. BAM's members join through one of our 12 local associations throughout the state.

BAM is grateful to its members who have worked tirelessly and safely through the pandemic to provide housing opportunities to Minnesotans. Challenges remain including soaring lumber prices, scarcity of materials and pandemic-related supply chain disruptions which builders are wrestling with to affordably meet the housing needs of Minnesotans.

BAM wants to highlight our concerns with HF1402 (Keeler) which would allow the communities of Moorhead, Dilworth, and Breckenridge to have footing depths of 54 inches, down from the 60 inches currently in Minnesota Code. This would simply move the boarder for this code from where it is presently to a newly created one.

Over the years BAM has seen many attempts to carve out certain building codes and we have not been supportive of any of these initiatives. We are certainly sympathetic to these three communities and understand that the Minnesota Building Code does significantly add to the cost of a home. **BAM is unable to support the further fragmentation of the code as patchwork enforcement already disadvantages our licensed contractor- members.** Additionally, it exposes homeowners to unlicensed contractors not bound by the consumer protections and ethics licensed contractors follow by law. We suggest that the legislature consider a scientific study of the merit of 54 inch footings instead of 60 inch footings. This would allow us to approach and understand this issue from a scientific and safety standpoint, and not rush for a solution that arbitrarily changes building code.

Sincerely,

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**BUILDERS ASSOCIATION of MINNESOTA**