



March 23, 2026

Chair Quam, Chair Freiberg, and Members of the House Elections and Government Operations Committee:

The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Metro Cities, and Municipal Legislative Commission appreciate the opportunity to comment on HF 3895 (Igo), which restricts certain fundamental local authorities, and is scheduled to be heard Monday.

Our associations respectfully, but firmly, oppose the bill. We remain concerned with the bill's broad local preemption that would, in effect, treat cities as obstacles, rather than key partners, in advancing affordable housing needs, at the local level.

We appreciate the stated goal by policymakers on the critical need to address housing and cities fully share in this goal, which is about ensuring that adequate housing is available for people across the state. All across Minnesota, cities work on housing – through local zoning policy, infrastructure extension, building permits, density bonuses, investing local funds in affordable housing, applying for state funding, creating housing trust funds, and many other locally determined programs. Cities work with residents to advance projects that are tailored to local needs and concerns. They do this alongside core responsibilities for providing public health and safety, managing compatibility of land uses, and providing public infrastructure such as streets and utilities.

Meeting housing needs across the state will not be achieved through broad state mandates. Instead, these will prevent local officials from meeting responsibilities to their community and allow city officials far less say in how a city manages housing and other local and community needs. Again, we are concerned with a legislative approach that implies cities are hindrances, rather than partners, to housing production. With all respect, we believe this is a misguided assumption, and one with substantially detrimental consequences for the residents of Minnesota.

While we appreciate the intent of the bill's authors and the work that has been done to address concerns, our associations do not support legislation that strips fundamental local authority and does not address key issues of our state's housing challenges. It fails to reflect basic cost drivers for housing production. It does not acknowledge the need for ongoing tailored investment and policy to effectively manage development and growth, including housing. Further, for cities in the metropolitan area in particular, it is directly interferent with intersecting local and regional planning, policies and funding that address density, affordable housing production, wastewater, transit, and other coordinated infrastructure. The bill also significantly reduces opportunities for residents and businesses to weigh in on city plans and projects that are the bedrock of local democracy.

Addressing housing affordability and availability must be locally driven. It must also focus on funding for projects that cannot be provided by the market and provide sufficient flexible tools. The provision of all housing is complex, and the challenge is ongoing. Locally elected officials are responsive and accountable to the local communities that they serve and are vital partners in this work.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

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