



June 20, 2021

Dear Chair Hausman, Vice Chair Howard, Minority Lead Theis and Members,

Homes for All would like to thank the committee for the investments made across the continuum in the Omnibus Housing Finance and Policy Bill. Since the Homes for All coalition formed a decade ago, the statewide need for affordable housing across the continuum has only grown. We have increasing numbers of unhoused people around our state, thousands of workers cannot afford or find a stable home near their place of employment, and affordable homeownership is even further out of reach – especially for our Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Our coalition has grown to 270+ organizations reaching every corner of the state and representing non-profits, direct service providers, faith communities, the private sector, local municipalities, and philanthropic organizations - all working in unison to amplify statewide affordable housing needs at the Capitol.

As you know, Minnesota was in an affordable housing crisis long before the COVID-19 pandemic – while we were hoping for a larger budget target, the investments made in the final bill are a great way to continue making progress on addressing this crisis and ensuring housing stability for everyone across Minnesota. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to weigh-in on budget and policy priorities throughout the 2021 regular session as well as the current special session and would like to highlight areas from our agenda that made it into the final Omnibus Housing Bill.

1. **Eviction Moratorium Off-Ramp:** Homes for All advocates have been especially concerned with the potential for a wave of evictions as the pandemic winds down. The eviction moratorium phaseout is a solid compromise and Homes for All wants to acknowledge that the policies in the bill will serve Minnesota renters better than if Executive Order 20-79 and/or the peacetime emergency were to end abruptly without any guardrails. Homes for All would like to especially acknowledge and thank lawmakers for the inclusion of a 15-day notice requirement and the protection against eviction while an application is pending. These provisions will provide most tenants and landlords with clarity and a pathway to avoid costly and life-altering evictions.
2. **Housing Infrastructure Bonds (HIBs):** The consistent investments through HIBs in recent years continues to make a significant impact on Minnesota’s affordable housing market. We applaud the investment of \$100 million in HIBs again this year, but we need to express our disappointment in the exclusion of the deeper affordability new use and Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) preservation. These two types of affordable housing are extremely difficult to finance and we were hoping to finally see investments made in those areas through appropriations or HIBs. Additionally, we would prefer to have the full \$100 million in HIBs unallocated, we do recognize the importance and need for increased investments in homeownership and manufactured housing.

3. **Shelter Provider Task Force:** Emergency shelter saves lives, but our shelter system is not working for everyone. The Task Force on Shelter will bring together key stakeholders, including former shelter guests and rural shelter providers, to develop recommendations that will strengthen Minnesota's emergency shelter system and ensure that everyone has a safe and dignified place to stay while they seek permanent housing. Thank you for funding this important priority. The Homes for All Coalition looks forward to returning next session with the recommendations from the Shelter Task Force.
4. **Workforce Homeownership Investments:** Increased investments are needed across the entire continuum, but we are appreciative of the significant new investments directed to support affordable homeownership in the Omnibus Housing Bill. This critical funding will help increase the supply of homes available to lower income, but income ready, households. It is no secret that Minnesota's racial homeownership disparity is embarrassingly high. State resources are one of the main ways to make progress towards helping BIPOC households realize homeownership opportunities, and it makes sense then to invest more in the programs that can make a difference.
5. **Other Investments:** While not explicitly on Homes for All's agenda this year, investments in the Challenge Program, Local Housing Trust Fund Match and Manufacture Housing Infrastructure are all programs we have supported in recent years. We are thankful for these investments, and we are confident that they will make a meaningful impact in communities across Minnesota.

Thank you again to all the lawmakers that helped put together the Omnibus Housing Bill. Homes for All advocates remain committed to seeking significant funding increases as well as game-changing policy provisions and we look forward to continuing to discuss these issues with lawmakers during the interim as well as during the 2022 legislative session.

We know that where we live impacts everything. Home is where children learn, workers earn and how communities thrive. The Homes for All coalition is available for any additional information you may need. Please reach out to the policy co-chairs, Zack Eichten (651-829-0888), Michael Dahl (651-336-5902) or Kari Johnson (612-387-6398) should you need any further information.

Sincerely,

Pastor Sue Koesterman & Chad Adams
Homes for All Co-Chairs