



March 3, 2026

Dear Chairs and Members of the House Housing Finance and Policy Committee,

Metro Cities appreciates the opportunity to comment on HF XXXX, 'The Starter Homes Act', as amended by the DE amendment. Metro Cities appreciates the ongoing work with bill authors on cities' concerns with the bill, but must respectfully continue to oppose language, however well intended, that preempts fundamental aspects of local decision-making.

City officials are elected to address land use, zoning and other issues with community input, tools and policies that are tailored to the needs of the city. The significant preemption language in the bill would give developers excessive, undue influence in how communities are shaped and managed, rather than the community. Below are some specific concerns with the bill:

- **Subd. 3, Administrative Approvals:** The administrative review requirements in the bill would hinder local processes for requests related to multifamily residential developments. These local processes provide for adequate management of public needs, as well as public input and engagement, and as such are key underpinnings of democratic process. This subdivision applies to all metropolitan area cities over 2,500 in population.
- **Subd. 6, Mixed Housing Districts:** This provision requires a city to allow mixed housing (duplex, triplex, fourplex, and townhouses) on at least 33 percent of the buildable area zoned for single family housing. This mandate is a blunt instrument that has high potential to disrupt the ability of cities to adequately manage land uses and needs. This subdivision applies to all metropolitan area cities over 2,500 in population.
- **Subd. 8, Multifamily Residential Developments in Commercial Districts:** This provision requires a city to allow for multifamily residential developments on at least 33 percent of the buildable area in a city. Many metropolitan cities wish to protect and expand commercial property tax bases to meet community needs and to provide for balance in tax bases. This subdivision applies to all metropolitan area cities over 2,500 in population.
- **Subd. 9, Additional Requirements/Criteria-Based Provision:** This subdivision requires cities to choose and satisfy certain criteria related to land uses, density, parking, and zoning, most of which are highly prescriptive and lack any nexus to ensure the advancement of housing that is affordable or addresses other specific local housing needs.

Cities in the metropolitan area also work in close partnership with the Metropolitan Council to address planning for affordable, lifecycle and other housing needs in the region. Cities are subject to regional requirements that are determined through processes that consider community differences and constraints, provide for local input and maintain a high level of local autonomy. The preemption provisions in the bill would stand to significantly undermine this work, that at its core is done to address housing and infrastructure needs for the region.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Nauman".

Patricia Nauman  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ania McDonnell".

Ania McDonnell  
Government Relations Specialist