

Hearing Date February 20, 2024 at 1:00pm

Testimony in Opposition to HB 538

Dear Committee Chair and Environmental & Transportation Committee Members:

I urge you and The Environment & Transportation Committee to reject HB 538. The Governor's "Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024" - for the following reasons:

1.) Section 7-105 of the bill states that local jurisdictions may not apply the standards of Adequate Public Facilities laws to deny, restrict or limit a State-funded Affordable Housing Project. Existing residents should not have to experience potentially overcrowded schools, congested roadways, drainage problems or overburdened sewer systems because an Affordable Housing project is able to bypass Adequate Facilities regulations.

2.) Secondly, in certain land use categories, Affordable Housing is given a zoning density bonus, including a 30% bonus in multi-family zones and the highest allowable residential density in nonresidential zones. This approach ignores local land use and density decisions that have the benefit of input from local planning commissions and local legislative scrutiny and decision making. Citizens, planners and local elected officials have thoughtfully tried to create a balance in land use density that this bill, if enacted, would overturn. The net result could be overcrowding and congestion, two conditions that citizens should not have to endure, regardless of the noble intentions of this bill.

In closing, let land use and density considerations remain at the local level. We don't need the heavy hand of the State disrupting the balance that appropriately should be set by local authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

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