

CITY OF VICTORIA

Victoria, MN  Est. 1915

March 5, 2024

To: Representative Jim Nash
349 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF 4009

Dear Representative Nash:

Thank you for your dedication to address the important issues of middle housing, lifecycle housing, and housing availability. As the City of Victoria, we share your commitment to ensuring that every individual and family can find their North Star home and hope it is within Victoria, Carver County, or our surrounding neighbors.

While we appreciate the efforts being made to address the housing crisis and commend the collaboration with cities and developers, we also believe that certain aspects of House File 4009 (HF 4009) require careful reconsideration and modification to better align with the unique needs and challenges faced by local communities.

Victoria, with its challenging soil conditions, multiple waterways, and shoreland districts, places an importance on protecting our natural resources, and waterways. The proposed density and provisions regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) may inadvertently compromise our ability to safeguard our natural spaces effectively. For example, with Victoria's heavy clay soils, having multiple primary structures in close proximity may create erosion and drainage issues for those living in these homes. These are items not addressed within the State Building Code, but as stewards of our communities, it is imperative we have the flexibility to address the distinct geographic features and characteristics of our area while tackling the housing crisis.

Acting as stewards of our community, we firmly believe in transparency throughout every aspect of the public process. Limiting public hearings restricts the voices of constituents. It is important to ensure that every resident has a meaningful opportunity to contribute to decisions made by their government.

We also acknowledge the challenges facing rural or suburban communities like ours, where public transit options are limited and where vehicle ownership is still required to get to work, school, and local businesses. It is crucial for us to provide adequate parking for our future residents, and we urge you to consider granting cities the flexibility to meet the parking needs of our constituents, both current and future. Further, as an area experiencing rapid growth amidst aging state roadway infrastructure, congestion and traffic patterns are important considerations in our development plans. Limiting conditional uses and precluding the ability to request important safety measures, such as traffic studies, impedes our ability to prioritize the safety and well-being of our residents, business patrons, and community members.

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Overall, our concerns to HF 4009 stems from our commitment to safety, environmental preservation, and fostering inclusive communities for current and future generations. We strongly believe that modifications to the bill are necessary to afford cities like ours the flexibility required to build resilient, safe, and thriving communities.

Thank you for considering our concerns and for your dedication to finding solutions that benefit all communities across our state. We are in this together and welcome any questions or future conversation about HF 4009.

Sincerely,



Debra McMillan
Mayor, City of Victoria