

Senator Rich Draheim
Senate Housing Finance & Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3227
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155



Representative Alice Hausman
House Housing Finance & Policy
State Office Building
453 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

February 2, 2020

Dear Chair Draheim, Chair Hausman and Committee Members,

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 the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the lives of Minnesotans, the Homes for All Coalition is grateful for the legislature's support over the past year. As you know thousands of Minnesotans are at increased risk of homelessness and housing instability because of the pandemic and the actions taken now will help stabilize families and communities in the long-term. We ask for your commitment during the 2021 legislative session to support eviction protections, shelter investments and housing assistance through the duration of the pandemic.

The coalition's comprehensive legislative agenda for the 2021 legislative session also supports investments and policy changes across the affordable housing continuum that would make significant impacts for Minnesotans and the communities they call home. While we know the needs are great for many departments, especially during a pandemic and with a projected budget deficit, investments in affordable housing and supportive services now are life changing for families and communities by providing the foundation needed for stability and new opportunities.

Minnesota is a state of abundance, but for far too long thousands of Minnesotans have struggled with homelessness and housing instability. We know the needs are great and the solutions are complex, but we want to take a moment to acknowledge our support for the Governor's proposed budget investments at Minnesota Housing. Budget investments in the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP), Challenge Program, Bridges Rental Assistance, Homework Starts with Home, and Workforce Homeownership Program and multiple other homeownership programs will help support those that need it along the full affordable housing continuum. We also are extremely supportive of the recommendation for additional Housing Infrastructure Bonds, consistent investments through bonding provide a solid path forward to solving our state's affordable housing crisis.

As you also know, Minnesota was in an affordable housing crisis long before the COVID-19 pandemic - should there be an opportunity for ongoing investments, we encourage you to advocate for base budget increases to programs rather than one-time funding. We look forward to working with both the Senate and House Housing Committees, the Governor and Minnesota Housing on advancing these much needed investments. We also hope to continue to engage in discussions regarding other policy and budgetary investments on our agenda like tenant protections and General Obligation Bonds for Public Housing preservation.

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 to help inform your budgetary decisions. 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 regarding the specifics of the Homes for All budget request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

cc: Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Commissioner Jennifer Ho