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Stephan W. Currie, Executive Director

June 2, 2021

Rep. Julie Calley
Chair
House Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee
124 N. Capitol Ave.
Lansing, MI 48933

Chair Calley and Committee Members,

As part of the Housing Michigan coalition, the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) appreciates the work of coalition leaders and legislators to address housing needs across all Michigan counties. County governments across the state, from the Upper Peninsula to Southeast Michigan, serve as the social safety net for our residents and have a keen interest in ensuring adequate and affordable housing is available to them. We all agree that there are significant challenges in supporting housing needs in our communities due to a shortage of housing supply and affordability issues.

MAC supports many bills in this package. However, the association cannot take a position of support today on House Bill 4646.

Too often, counties are excluded from making property tax exemption and community development decisions due to state laws that grant all decision-making to the municipality or the appointed boards that oversee projects. As a unit of government concerned with the health and well-being of the entire county population, county government should be at the table and have a voice in exemption decisions.

Unfortunately, the bill in question does not provide counties any decision-making authority over their own revenue and/or participation in the expanded NEZ program. To ensure counties have a voice at the table, and to foster greater collaboration (not exclusion) on housing development issues, MAC recommends inserting language from other bills within the package that allows the county board of commissioners 28 days to reject the locally approved NEZ. By inserting this language, we will ensure the municipality wishing to create the expanded NEZ communicates with the county and includes them in the planning and financial decision-making necessary to advance affordable housing. This amendment would create consistency throughout the bill package.

We have ongoing conversations with our partners at the Michigan Municipal League to ensure both local and county government interests are protected. Certainly, MAC's goal is to support each bill in this package, and we are committed to working together to support the development of housing that is attainable for our residents. Please feel free to reach out for further questions on our current position.

Respectfully,

Meghann Keit
Governmental Affairs Associate

Cc: Rep. Kyra Bolden