

Submitter: Kelly Ritz
On Behalf Of: Stone Bridge Homes NW and Venture Properties Inc
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4035

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Anderson, and Members of the House Committee on Housing,

My name is Kelly Ritz. I am the President of Stone Bridge Homes NW, LLC and Venture Properties, Inc and I have over 30 years of experience in homebuilding and residential subdivision development. I strongly support the passage of House Bill 4035 and urge you to vote in support. Although House Bill 4035 seeks to make four (4) modifications (all important) to existing Senate Bill 1537 I will focus my testimony to the increase of the "total acreage" provision.

The current acreage restrictions of 100 acres often force developers to prioritize density over livability. When land is limited, every square foot must be a buildable lot just to make the project work. It limits or minimizes the ability to include community infrastructure such as open spaces, bike and walking paths, parks and other neighborhood amenities. This is a problem and makes it very difficult to plan for and build complete residential housing communities.

HB 4035 increases the acreage limits to 170 acres, which allows us to move beyond having to choose between housing units and a public park or other amenities. With more land, we can deliver both and have the flexibility to move from simply placing "units on a map" to creating cohesive neighborhoods that foster long-term pride in ownership.

Essential community features, such as playgrounds, childcare centers, or community pools, require a specific number of housing units to be sustainable. Small-scale developments lack the housing density to fund the construction or maintenance of these neighborhood amenities. Larger-scale or master planned projects provide the necessary scale of home units to support and maintain high-quality amenities like parks, playgrounds and integrated trail systems. In large communities these "quality of life" features are financially viable and built into the project without unreasonably impacting the final price of the homes. The less homes in the community the higher the per home burden is to pay for the amenities and their maintenance on a per house basis. The more homes that can be share the cost of these amenities the less of a burden they are on a per house basis. It should be a win-win situation. With more land to build more homes, the amenities to support them can be built and maintained, and the cost on per home basis is minimized.

Please vote in favor of 4035 and give builders and developers the ability to help solve the housing crisis. Thank you for your consideration.