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To: Senate Committee on Housing, Commerce and Trade

From: Curt Witynski, J.D., Deputy Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Date: February 2, 2022

Re: SB 840/AB 608, Mandating Certain Municipal Zoning and Subdivision Practices Relating to Multifamily Housing and Workforce Housing Projects

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities opposes SB 840/AB 608, which imposes several mandates on cities and villages, including the following:

1. Provide for at least one zoning district in which multifamily housing not fewer than 16 residential units per acre is a permitted use.
2. Permit residential use at a density of at least 16 units per acre in any commercial zoning district.
3. Establish a process for approving or denying a workforce housing project within 90 days of receiving application.

The League opposes this bill because it interferes with local policy decisions about the housing density and character of a community. Regardless of whether one thinks the requirements in the bill have merit as good public policy, these types of land use policy decisions are best made by the village trustees and city council members elected by the residents of their community to make those decisions. They are familiar with the character of their community and are tasked with responding to the needs and desires of the citizens that elected them. Density requirements and zoning policy should not be determined from above and imposed by the state on localities.

We urge you to vote against recommending passage of SB 840/AB 608. Thanks for considering our comments.