



The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce

Better business. Better community.

To: Indiana General Assembly Natural Resources Committee
From: Christopher J Emge, Director of Advocacy & Public Policy
Date: January 16, 2024
Subject: **Endorsement of House Bill 1108**

In principle, the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is for local control. It would not support legislation that involves an overreach by the State government in local matters that should be solved through local elected officials. We believe that those closest to the issue are the best to solve it. For example, we would not want Cass County residents weighing in on Monroe County matters and I assume the feeling is mutual.

However, these are not ordinary times, Monroe County is in a **housing crisis** that requires a state of emergency from the very principles that guide us. **This is why we support House 1108.**

Everyone deserves an **opportunity for home ownership**, yet rising housing costs, limited supply, and poor decisions have made that unattainable in Monroe County. This affects not only homeowners but also economic development. It becomes increasingly difficult to keep and attract talent with a shortage of housing stock. We have seen Cook Medical move its workforce housing initiative to neighboring counties out of pure necessity.

Currently, the State median price for a home is \$242,000 according to BankRate.Com. In **Monroe County, that figure jumps to \$390,000, up from \$324,000 last year.** 3 years ago, those prices were just under \$250,000. Contrast this to our median income, which stands at \$65,000, the math simply does not add it.

The legislation before you addresses the slope concern that is highly restrictive in Monroe County at 15 percent. This is not a perfect bill, nor will it be a silver bullet, the price of land is the price of land. The amenities and quality of the place will always put a premium on living in Monroe County. Nevertheless, the Bloomington Chamber believes House Bill 1108 will open more land for **responsible development** that still considers the watershed area. We very much take seriously the issues of erosion control, landslide risks, and habitat preservation. However, after talking with engineers, the Chamber believes the slope issue can be remedied through strategies such as terracing, special foundations, and drainage/erosion control.

In closure, The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce supports the passing of **HB 1108**