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**Advocacy Digest | April 20, 2023**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**Update on Workforce Housing Efforts**

We have been meeting for several months on a number of bills that would spur more workforce housing construction in Wisconsin.

This effort is being led by Assembly Housing Chair Rob Brooks and Senate Housing Chair Romain Quinn. In addition to WBA, the Wisconsin Realtors Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Wisconsin League of Municipalities have been meeting with the housing chairs to hammer out different ideas.

What we are looking at are three, zero percent loan programs that would help to fund infrastructure for new workforce housing subdivisions, rehabilitation of multifamily units on the second or third floor of existing commercial space in downtown areas, and the demolition or rehabilitation of vacant commercial space that can be used for housing.

In order for a developer to be eligible for any of these 0 percent loans from WHEDA, they would have to work with a community who would need to show changes that they have made to reduce the cost of the housing to be considered for the loan. Those options could be reducing or eliminating impact fees, smaller lot sizes, narrower setbacks, and narrower sidewalks, to name a few.

All of these loans are voluntary, and the communities are allowed to pick from several options to show they are reducing the cost of housing in their municipality.

In addition to the three loan programs, we are also working on a bill that would allow “development by right” if a project complied with the current plan and ordinances in a municipality. The bill would also call for a simple majority vote to rezone land and would no longer a supermajority and provide more parameters on who can legally challenge zoning and residential land use decisions.

Chairs Quinn and Brooks are hoping to introduce these bills soon and when they are released, we will be communicating with you via email to contact your member of the state assembly and senate to support these efforts.

**NAHB Issue Summary provided by Evan Loukadakis, Federal Legislative Manager, NAHB**

**Waters of the United States (WOTUS)**—we know that 25% of the cost of a new single-family home is government regulation. The new Biden WOTUS rule is broad and overreaching, which could add tens of thousands of dollars to the land development process.

* We’ve helped usher the Congressional Review Act to overturn the WOTUS rule through the legislative process**. Recently the Senate voted 53-43 to overturn the rule—5 democrats crossed over.** The CRA now goes to President Biden.  [See More.](https://www.nahb.org/news-and-economics/press-releases/2023/03/nahb-applauds-senate-passage-of-wotus-resolution)

**Electrical Transformers:** The transformer shortage around the U.S. is not only concerning to home building, but to our energy reliability. The Department of Energy wants to increase transformer efficiency standards which would further exacerbate the shortage.

* NAHB members swelled a recent SBA virtual forum (with DOE regulators in attendance) to denounce the proposed changes.
* As a result, the SBA’s Advocacy Office sent a strong rebuke to DOE highlighting the ill-conceived efficiency proposal. [Dive deeper.](https://www.nahb.org/blog/2023/03/sba-transformer)

**H.R. 1 (The Lower Energy Costs Act):** This legislation is House Republicans signature bill for the 118th Congress. NAHB lobbied directly for this bill for 2 key reasons:

* The bill repeals the $1 billion allocated in the Inflation Reduction Act to pressure States and Locals to adopt costly energy codes, such as the 2021 IECC.
* The Palmer/Lesko **gas stove amendment** protects homeowners’ choice when it comes to the appliances and energy sources in their homes. 187 million Americans who use natural gas save an average of $1,068 each year.
* H.R. 1 and the Gas Stove Amendment passed with bipartisan support. [See More.](https://www.nahb.org/blog/2023/03/energy-bill)

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