

Letter of Support – Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

May 19, 2026

Board of County Commissioners
DeSoto County
201 E. Oak Street, Suite 201
Arcadia, FL 34266

Re: Support for Increased Bonus Density for Workforce and Affordable Housing

Dear Chairman Hickox and Honorable Commissioners,

On behalf of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), we respectfully submit this letter in strong support of adopting enhanced bonus density allowances for developments that include workforce and affordable housing units.

As you know, the AHAC is charged under Section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, with reviewing local policies and recommending strategies that expand the availability of safe, attainable housing for residents across income levels. After careful review of current market conditions, development trends, and the County's long-term housing needs, the Committee unanimously agrees that increased bonus density is one of the most effective and fiscally responsible tools available to the Board.

Why Bonus Density Is Needed

- Housing demand far exceeds supply, particularly for households earning between 60% and 120% of Area Median Income.
- Construction and land costs continue to rise, making it increasingly difficult for developers to produce units at attainable price points without regulatory incentives.
- Local employers report workforce shortages, driven in part by the lack of nearby housing that workers can reasonably afford.
- Bonus density does not require direct County expenditure, yet it meaningfully improves project feasibility and encourages mixed-income development.

Benefits to the County

Increasing allowable density for qualifying projects will:

- Expand the supply of workforce and affordable units in targeted growth areas.
- Support economic development by helping employers attract and retain staff.
- Promote smart growth by encouraging compact, efficient land use.
- Leverage private-sector investment to meet public housing goals.

In Closing

The AHAC believes increased bonus density will significantly strengthen the County's ability to meet current and future housing needs. We appreciate the Board's continued commitment to supporting attainable housing opportunities for residents and stand ready to assist with implementation or further policy development.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Bowser Chair
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
DeSoto County