



Oppose Efforts to Prohibit Inclusionary Zoning in Montana

HB 259 would put affordable housing further out of reach for Montana's lower-income workers

OPPOSE HB 259 (Representative Vinton)

- HB 259 takes aim at inclusionary zoning, which has been deployed in various forms in communities across the country to protect and expand access to affordable housing. This bill would make it illegal for local governments to establish zoning rules that require builders to pay a fee or set property aside to support housing for specific income levels or at specific sale prices. It would also prevent them from applying those requirements as a condition for approving a new subdivision or annexation. In Montana, Bozeman and Whitefish currently have inclusionary zoning programs.
- This bill is supported by the Montana and Southwest Montana Building Industry Associations. Representative Vinton co-owns a construction company.
- **This bill would invalidate affordable housing ordinances in Bozeman and Whitefish and is opposed by local officials around the state.**

This Bill Threatens Montanans' Right to a Just and Livable Future

- It was difficult for lower-income workers (e.g., teachers) to afford housing in several Montana markets prior to the pandemic, and Montana housing prices have skyrocketed since then.
- **This bill is a threat to a just and livable future for all Montanans, making it harder for Montanans to live in the places they work.** This will become worse as the climate crisis ramps up the pressure on low-income renters displaced by extreme weather events. As Montana aims to mitigate the climate crisis and adapt to the unavoidable impacts, we also need to make it possible for Montanans to meet their basic needs in an increasingly challenging environment.
- HB 259 also hampers the ability of local governments to decide how to address the affordable housing crises in their communities, doing away with a key tool that has formed a cornerstone of two cities' affordable housing programs. **Local elected leaders are in the best position to decide how to address the affordable housing issue in their communities.** Inclusionary zoning is only part of the solution, but the state shouldn't interfere with the plans Whitefish and Bozeman have put in place. Limiting local control in favor of state control is a slippery slope.

See the [current bill text](#) to learn more & check out our [citizen lobbying resource](#) to get involved in our legislative work more generally. Follow Forward Montana to get updates on this bill in particular.