

## News Release from



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 24, 2024

CONTACT: Narine Manukova  
517-490-8232

### **LARA: “We Don’t Care About Governor’s Housing Goals”**

Lansing, MI - Today the Home Builders Association of Michigan (HBAM) drew attention to the contradictory actions being taken by the Whitmer Administration. The Governor unveiled her plan to invest some \$1.4 billion in much needed housing across the state this evening. However, recently proposed changes to building codes by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA), including mandatory sprinkler requirements in all new homes and other costly changes, will raise the cost of building a typical Michigan home by more than \$20,000. This will price-out some 100,000 families (or more) from being able to afford a home in Michigan and reduce overall housing production.

“We remain hopeful that the Governor and other attainable housing advocates within her administration will communicate their opposition to these costly changes,” said HBAM CEO Bob Filka. “LARA is either operating in a vacuum or is pandering to manufacturers who would like to mandate the use of their products instead of convincing home owners their products are worth purchasing.” LARA’s proposals, as currently drafted, will require new residential homes (and most renovated homes) to have 2 X 6 framing, R-60 insulation in ceilings, inch thick exterior sheathing, mandatory fire suppression systems (sprinklers inside homes) and arc fault circuit interrupters in every room, among other costly measures. “For every \$1,000 increase in the cost of a home in our state, nearly 5,000 households are priced out of being able to afford one,” noted Filka. “If not altered, the state’s proposed code changes will price-out more than 100,000 additional Michigan families. These proposed changes need to be modified and can be, while achieving similar goals at far less cost.”

With high interest rates and a median home sales price approaching \$450,000 or more in some areas, many Michiganders have already been priced out of the housing marketplace. Filka highlighted that builders are not opposed to improving state building codes. “HBAM has offered an alternative proposal to the state that would result in similar energy efficiency improvements at 1/3 of the cost of LARA’s proposal, by removing manufacturer-driven proscriptive requirements and providing more options and flexibility for builders. In terms of ensuring citizens are protected from needless fire fatalities, neither sprinklers nor arc fault circuit interrupters will save lives. Research shows that properly functioning smoke detectors are the key to fire safety in homes. Requiring sprinklers in all new homes will not. To the contrary, it will make new housing more expensive and keep or push people into older substandard housing that is more susceptible to fire. Virtually every state in the country has rejected the idea that sprinklers should be required for residential homes. Michigan should too! We have been a partner with the Whitmer Administration in pursuing many new efforts to increase attainable housing production across the state. That positive momentum will be lost if we don’t balance the cost of new building code standards with housing attainability.”

*The Home Builders Association of Michigan is a professional trade association comprised of 18 local homebuilder associations around the state and their 5,000 builder, subcontractor and supplier members. HBAM works to positively promote the building industry and impact legislative, regulatory and legal issues affecting housing attainability.*

####