



May 22, 2018

Office of the Governor
PO Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Governor John Bel Edwards,

The Louisiana Legislature recently made the detrimental decision to pass a bill banning municipal and parish governments from establishing inclusionary zoning policies. Senator Martiny's bill, which replaces the phrase "inclusionary zoning" with "voluntary economic incentive policies," makes it so that affordable housing policies would be voluntary, rather than mandated as recommended by New Orleans' City Planning Commission and City Council. With this measure, the State Legislature will prevent municipalities from creating and enforcing policies that support affordable housing across Louisiana. The wide ripple of effects that will undoubtedly occur from the implementation of this bill will be devastating for our state, as New Orleans and many other cities throughout Louisiana are in the midst of an affordable housing crisis.

The Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance ([GNOHA](http://www.gnoha.org)), alongside our many local and statewide affordable housing advocates and allies, are deeply disappointed in the decision of the state government to allow this bill to pass. It's nearly unfathomable to think that throughout our long and frantic history, our elected officials in the State Capitol have yet to realize that the market cannot and will not correct itself. The reason market rate housing doesn't serve low to moderate income households is not because developers are bad seeds or have ill intentions. Construction costs are high and land is very expensive. However, with inclusionary zoning policies, we can help market rate developers actually create those lower priced homes that cities across Louisiana need. Inclusionary zoning has become the smart way to do equitable housing in many cities across the U.S.

Other cities in Louisiana's, notably Lake Charles and Calcasieu Parish, inventory of affordable houses on the market is down while at the same time there has been a gradual increase in their workforce since 2012. Housing costs are rising, yet wages have remained stagnant. Increasingly, we are seeing awareness around affordable units coming offline now and in the coming years. This will only serve to aggravate the issue. A mandatory inclusionary zoning policy will open the pipeline to creating long-term affordable opportunities for residents across our state.

Without the powerful tool of mandatory inclusionary zoning, our City Council and others around the state will be rendered helpless in creating equitable, sustainable, and affordable homes for all. [HousingNOLA](http://www.housingnola.org) and GNOHA, in tandem with statewide affordable housing allies and partners, have spent years working within our communities to identify their unique needs

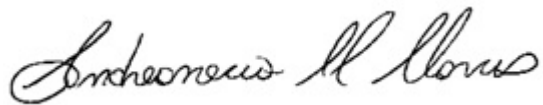
A Shared Initiative, Inc.
Alembic Community Development
Alliance for Affordable Energy
Asakura Robinson Company
Broadmoor Improvement Association
Committee for a Better New Orleans
Crescent City Community Land Trust
Desire Community Housing Corporation
Dillard University
Enterprise Community Partners
Family Resources of New Orleans
Finance Authority of New Orleans
First NBC Bank
Foundation for Louisiana
GCR Inc.
Global Green USA
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Green Coast Enterprises
GNO Fair Housing Action Center
Greater New Orleans, Inc.
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership
Harmony Neighborhood Development
Home by Hand, Inc.
Housing Authority of New Orleans
Iberia Bank
Iris Development
Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative
Jefferson Community Action Programs
Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative
Jerusalem Economic Development Corp.
JPMorgan Chase Bank
LA Association of Affordable Housing Providers
Louisiana Appleseed
Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Orgs.
Louisiana Homebuyer Education Collaborative
Louisiana Housing Alliance
Louisiana Housing Corporation
Lower 9th Ward Homeownership Association
McCormack Baron Salazar
Neighborhood Development Foundation
Neighborhood Housing Services
New Day Homeowner Services
New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity
New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
Northshore Housing Initiative
Office of Housing Policy & Community Development
Perez, APC
Preservation Resource Center
Project Homecoming
Providence Community Housing
Puentes New Orleans
Rebuilding Together New Orleans
Redmellon
Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation
Renaissance Property Group
SBP
Service Providers and Professionals Assoc.
Spottswood CDC
St. John the Baptist Housing Authority
St. Roch Community Development Corporation
Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation
Tulane City Center
United Way of Southeast Louisiana
University of New Orleans
Urban Focus
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Volunteers of America
Wells Fargo
Whitney Bank

and establish a process and plan to meet those needs moving forward. Historically, affordable housing developers have relied heavily on federal dollars to fund the purchase of land and to pay for construction. However, with federal funding drying up, local solutions are becoming more important across the country, especially local solutions where the market growth can help pay for more affordable homes.

At the mercy of our state lawmakers, New Orleans will continue down its current path of displacement and disparity, straying further from the goals outlined in Housing NOLA's [10-Year Strategy Plan](#) and [Smart Housing Mix](#). A study by the [National Equity Atlas](#) showed that when renters thrive, cities thrive. If New Orleans renters were able to pay an amount they could afford on housing, they would have an extra \$7,200 per household to spend in their communities each year. Statewide, Louisiana renters would have an extra \$1.5B to contribute each year. Not only would this have a tremendous impact on economic development, but it would also help diminish the racial and gender inequities that have plagued New Orleans and the entire State of Louisiana for decades. For these reasons and so many more, GNOHA urges you, our State Governor, to intervene, veto Senate Bill 462, and remedy this situation before it's too late. We have to put housing first for the residents of Louisiana.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me at 504.224.8301 or amorris@gnoha.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andreanecia M. Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andreanecia M. Morris

President/Chair, Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance