



July 12, 2019

Washington State Building Code Council
1500 Jefferson Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501
Via: sbcc@des.wa.gov, krista.braaksma@des.wa.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 51-50-1107. We are writing to express our opposition to proposed changes in provision 1107.6, which will eliminate the dispersal of Accessible and Type A among the various class of units, including single and multiple bedroom units, and the proposed changes in 1107.6.2.2.1 that would reduce the number of Type A units from 5% of 10 dwelling units to 2% of 20 dwelling units. We have heard that the changes are a copying error, and if this is correct, we urge correction of the error prior to adoption of changes in the Building Code.

I am the Executive Director of Disability Rights Washington. Disability Rights Washington (DRW) is the federally mandated protection and advocacy system designated by the Governor of Washington to monitor facilities serving individuals with disabilities, investigate alleged abuse and neglect, provide information and referrals relating to rights, educate policies makers, and provide individual and systemic advocacy services to people with various disabilities across the state of Washington. Our constituents are people with disabilities in Washington State, many of whom require housing that is barrier-free. We have long heard expressions of frustration and despair from individuals who, after months or years of looking and waiting, cannot locate an accessible dwelling unit. It is imperative that the Building Code Council take no steps that will aggravate this situation. It is our concern that the proposed changes are likely to have that affect.

The proposed amendment to WAC 51-50-1107 changes language relating to multi-family dwellings. Specifically, the amendment will strike provision 1107.6, which calls for the dispersal of Accessible and Type A among the various class of units, including single and multiple bedroom units, in proportion to the number of such units in the building. Without guidance on the equal apportionment of accessible units, we are concerned that individuals and families who need accessible housing will not have meaningful choice when looking for places to live. We ask that this language remain in the IBC code.

The proposed amendment also changes 2015 IBC, 1107.6.2.2.1, reducing the number of Type A units from 5% of 10 dwelling units to 2% of 20 dwelling units. This reduction in the requirement



of total number of Type A units has the potential to reduce the number of available accessible units. We ask that the proposed language in 2018 IBC, 1107.3.2.2.1 read: "In Group R-2 occupancies containing more than 20 *dwelling units* or *sleeping units*, at least 5 percent, but not less than one, of the units shall be a *Type A unit*."

We are very concerned with the potential impact on homelessness. Locating and securing affordable housing is increasingly difficult for our state's residents, and this housing shortage contributes to our state's growing homelessness problem. As noted above, individuals wait for months or years for an opening, and when they become available, most are not accessible. The result is that individuals with disabilities who require accessibility features are especially disadvantaged in the search for a place to live.

We are hopeful that the proposed changes to the Building Code that we have referenced are indeed a copying error. In any event, we urge you not to adopt the amendments referenced above. If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact David Lord, the Public Policy Director for Disability Rights Washington.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Stroh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Stroh

Executive Director