



WHERE WE STAND

The following are the 2018 advocacy priorities of the Home Builders Association of Greater Cincinnati. For more information, please contact Dan Dressman, Executive Director, ddressman@cincybuilders.com

Environmental & Energy Regulations

The HBA supports a common sense, scientific approach to safeguarding the environment that reasonably balances protection of endangered species, clean air and clean water, with the need to allow local communities to grow and thrive.

Our members strive to be good stewards of the environment. One area which the HBA has taken action in this regard is the Green Building initiative, which encourages builders to utilize green methods and materials.

However, our members are consistently facing onerous and unnecessary regulation from the EPA, Army Corp of Engineers, Fish & Wildlife Service, and other federal agencies.

Examples of these regulations include:

- The EPA's Waters of the U.S. regulation that would expand the Clean Water Act by classifying ditches and detention basins as navigable waters of the U.S. and thus subject to federal regulation. This rule will increase the federal government's role in local land use and will increase the costs of residential construction.
- The Fish & Wildlife Service is placing the northern long-eared bat on the endangered species list. The listing will add significant restrictions on residential development, even though the FWS acknowledges that residential development has little impact on the bat.
- The Army Corp of Engineers is lengthening the amount of time it takes to approve national permits. They are also allowing the permitting process to get tied up in speculative historic preservation initiatives.

We oppose those regulations that do not meet the common sense, scientific, and reasonable balance test.

We also support reasonable energy efficiency standards, but are concerned about new standards that are not cost-effective for homeowners, e.g. new standards for hot water heaters, furnaces, and air conditioners.

Comprehensive Planning & Local Restrictions

The HBA supports good, sound planning for communities to ensure a livable community that reflects the lifestyle choices of community residents, a wide-range of housing choices, and a reasonable balance of residential, commercial, and employment based development.

We are concerned with several common initiatives inherent in comprehensive planning for a community.

- Restrictions on housing choices.
- Architectural design restrictions that mandate to homeowners how their home should look, what materials to use, and what landscaping to install.
- Lot size requirements that restrict the development of certain types of neighborhoods.
- Restrictions on the use of cul-de-sacs in communities.
- Restrictions that drive up the costs of housing, thus impacting housing affordability.

- Lack of planning for roads, infrastructure, and schools.
- The limitation on the extension of sewer and water.

There are also other local regulations that can add to the costs of housing.

- Requiring the use of certain type of materials in development (e.g. backfill around pipes) that are more than necessary for long-term maintenance of infrastructure.
- Requiring soil and water conservation methods that are more than necessary to protect natural resources.
- Inspection and permitting delays and inconsistency.
- Requiring union contracting on public utilities work.
- Signage restrictions

We encourage all local jurisdictions to collaborate with our members concerning regulations impacting the building industry to ensure legitimate local government objectives are met in a cost-effective and reasonable manner.

Building Codes & State Regulations

On the state level, there are four major issues that are of concern to the HBA.

- We oppose efforts to license or register home builders and home improvement contractors.
- We support efforts to allow townships to approve annexations of township fee-owned property, but oppose measures that would effectively eliminate Type II annexations.
- We oppose mandatory radon testing which often times is misleading. Instead, homeowners should determine whether they want to test.
- We support exemptions from lead paint remediation for homeowners who do not have children or pregnant women living in a home.

There are several areas of concern with regards to the state building code.

- We support statewide implementation of the statewide building code. Currently, 33 counties do not enforce the statewide building code or have a building department.
- We oppose mandatory residential sprinklers. They can be expensive and difficult to maintain, while posing threats of property damage if accidentally activated or not properly maintained. The decision should be left to the homeowner.
- We oppose code changes that would dramatically alter residential home designs and supports requiring that code changes undergo study to determine impact on housing affordability and ease of implementation.

Taxes & Fees

The HBA is concerned that federal, state, and local taxes and fees are too high and have a negative economic impact, especially on the homebuilding industry.

We oppose efforts to raise local, state, and federal revenue from our members when these efforts have a negative economic impact or are disproportionately applied to our members.

- We oppose impact fees for roads, sewers, schools and other community improvements that should be borne by the community as a whole.
- We oppose expanding the sales tax to common business-to-business transactions.
- We oppose increasing the CAT tax, which falls disproportionately on small businesses.
- We propose that permit, inspection, and plan review fees should be commensurate with staff time and expertise needed for review; and that local jurisdictions should acknowledge that reviews are for the benefit of the citizens and not the builder or developer.
- We support the continuation of the mortgage interest and property tax deductions.
- We support local tax abatements that encourage LEED and visitability certified homebuilding.