

Welcome to The State Affairs' first newsletter of 2025. In this edition, we look back on big wins of 2024 and hear updates from Executive Officers on some of their most impactful projects. We continue to strive to create an interactive experience, so please reach out and let us know how you like the issue and how we can improve.

TAKING A STAND AGAINST NIMBYS IN 2025

By Karl Eckhart | VP, State & Local Government Affairs, NAHB



“So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

This quote is from the inauguration speech of President Roosevelt in 1933. America is not nearly in the same dire straits; however, the housing policy crisis of today would lessen if people who have a home stop fearing those who want to live in their neighborhood.

The term we tend to use for citizens opposed to change in their community is NIMBYs (Not In My Backyard). The term's first known use was in the late 1970's as a reaction to power plants and highways built near neighborhoods. Now, the term refers to the reaction against the construction of attainable homes, and often because it will diversify the population within that community.

Members and HBA staff regularly contact NAHB for assistance to overcome anti-growth sentiment. The problem is so pervasive that you or another colleague in a nearby market has encountered a local vote to enact a moratorium; faced an increase in a sewer hookup fee of 300%; or a deeply flawed design review process that only allows for homes to be constructed with brick. Opposition to new development is not only from a small group of engaged citizens, but also from interest groups from all political stripes and social affiliations.

Nearly four out of five Americans (77%) agree that America is in the midst of a housing affordability crisis and that officials at all levels of government are not doing enough to address this vital issue, according to a recent NAHB survey. In addition,

more than half (56%) say it's important to create more medium-density affordable housing to moderate-income households, younger households and first-time home buyers.

Clearly, there is an urgent need for the housing industry to articulate the connection between boosting the housing supply and housing affordability.

There are steps HBAs and members can take to help temper down opposition to new development. If you are currently facing a moratorium that hampers growth in your community and need additional support, submit an application to the State and Local Issues Fund. NAHB's State and Local Government Affairs Committee has provided funds to HBAs for consumer education campaigns and advocacy strategies.

Another tactic is fostering relationships with your city council members. Most city leaders are not well-versed in residential construction, so discussing the importance of a streamlined approval process or providing information on the benefits of objective design and architectural standards can help limit opposition. Most importantly, when elected officials muster up the political will to approve new development, we must take the time to thank them.

We can build the million-plus homes a year needed when we spearhead high-impact campaigns to educate our citizens and city leaders. Please reach out to the State and Local Advocacy staff so we can help you take a stand against NIMBYs in 2025.

AROUND THE CAPITALS



2024 Housing Wins: A Legislative Look Back

In 2024, Home Builders' Association staff accomplished incredible feats, from fighting against impact fees to securing more funding for housing. Despite the legislative and regulatory roadblocks, many associations emerged victoriously, working with state and local governments to appropriate significant investments toward safe and attainable housing. This legislative look back includes a handful of the notable wins across the country.

Massachusetts committed \$5.1 billion to support the construction, preservation, and rehabilitation of over 65,000 homes statewide for the next five years. Thanks to Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, the Affordable Homes Act includes a boost to programs to support first-time home buyers and homeownership, incentives to con-

The governor received the award during Oregon Housing Economic Summit on Sept. 17, 2024.

“Affordable housing is the foundation of strong, healthy communities, and I am committed to building a future where every family has a place to call home,” said Governor Kotek.

In contrast to the sweeping legislative packages passed by Massachusetts and Oregon state legislatures, states like Arizona are taking an incremental approach to boosting the housing supply. Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs secured \$150 million for the State Housing Trust Fund to fund the construction of workforce housing and support housing assistance programs. The state also launched a new program to increase homeownership across the state, including \$13 million for first-time home buyer mortgage downpayments and interest rate relief.

“As Chairman of State and Local Government Affairs Committee, I was proud to nominate and award Governor Kotek the first state-level Defender of Housing Award from NAHB,” said Justin Wood. “Governor Kotek has gone above and beyond to try and solve the challenges that we face in building more housing in Oregon.”

struct low to moderate-income housing, and development credits to developers. The Act also authorizes \$2 billion for the rehabilitation, repair, and modernization of the state's public housing portfolio.

On the West Coast, Oregon passed legislation including \$376 million for infrastructure, housing construction, and homeless shelters. The investment is in addition to Governor Tina Kotek's executive order signed in 2023, establishing an annual housing production target of 36,000 homes each year over the next decade to address an estimated statewide housing shortage of 140,000 units. NAHB recognized Governor Kotek's tireless commitment to boosting the state's housing supply with the 2024 Defender of Housing Award.

Alternatively, Montana's Governor Greg Gianforte's HOMES (Homeownership Means Economic Stability) Revolving Loan Account provides loans and bonds to increase the housing supply with up to \$106 million allocated in 2024. The state legislature also allocated \$12 million for targeted workforce housing. It also authorized an additional \$50 million for the Coal Trust Multifamily Homes Program, which provides low-interest loans for multifamily home projects.

These housing wins across the country serve as great examples for the upcoming 2025 legislative sessions and as a foundation for housing investments for years to come. Housing is an issue that everyone talks about, from the halls of Congress to local city council meetings. NAHB hopes to build on this momentum and propel pro-housing policies and sound investments nationwide in statehouses this year.

INTERVIEW



Vote NO on Measure 4



Brittney Roehrich, NDAB
Chief Executive Officer

A Drastic Property Tax Proposal on the Ballot

On Nov. 5th, voters in North Dakota took to the polls to cast their ballots for elected representatives and Measure 4, which would have made North Dakota the first state to eliminate property taxes.

The North Dakota Association of Builders joined with other key stakeholders to create the Keep It Local coalition, which became the largest coalition the state had ever seen. Keep It Local ran an opposition campaign, making sure North Dakotans knew that citizens would end up footing the bill no matter what, even if their property taxes were no longer the means by which they were paying, and that proponents of the Measure had no plan to make up missing funds. They used the slogan ‘No Plan is a Bad Plan.’ Brittney Roehrich, EO of the North Dakota Association of Builders, answered a few questions about the campaign and how her HBA successfully defeated the initiative.

What advice would you give other EOs and associations facing a similar challenge?

Team up with like-minded associations to see if any type of coalition has been formed to face this challenge together. If not, work with your local chambers and other associations to get the ball rolling. Use this team that is dedicated to the issue to ask any questions and to help market this concern to the public.

What are a few highlights of the Keep It Local coalition and campaign?

The Keep It Local coalition was a small group last year when planning first started. Each time we met throughout 2024, the number of coalition members grew substantially, and the final total was 113. This was the largest coalition North Dakota has ever seen. Many coalition members traveled throughout the state the entire year to meet with organizations to educate them on our stance and its importance to get the word out to succeed in getting the measure defeated.

Did you face any unforeseen challenges?

Did anything surprise you?

As the election got closer, the proponents of this measure started to fine-tune their message, but they still didn’t have a solid plan to combat the missing funds if this measure would have passed. “No Plan is a Bad Plan,” was the message we spread throughout the campaign. We were pleasantly surprised to see so many associations and organizations come together for the sake of defeating this measure. This broad group of coalition members could potentially have disagreements on many other issues during a legislative session, but we all came together to make sure this didn’t pass.

Given the rejection of the ballot measure, how do you think property tax legislation will show up in 2025?

The North Dakota biennium legislative session will begin in January of 2025 and the main message that was conveyed leading up to the General Elections, was the need for tax relief and property tax reform. Our Governor-elect Kelly Armstrong says property tax reform is his top priority for the 2025 legislative session and he noted if state lawmakers don’t offer some tax relief soon, this proposal will “come back and it will come back fast.” The 2025 legislative session is on track to see dozens of bills related to property tax reform. Working with legislators to find both compromise and a “durable” form of tax relief and reform is how Armstrong and his administration intend to address rising property taxes. When legislators think they have put together the best property tax relief package, Armstrong said he “might push them to make it a little better.”

Now that we are post-election, what is a political or legislative priority you have for 2025?

Workforce development, cost of goods variations across the state, regulations, interest rates, appraisals, and property taxes to name a few!



*“As builders, we can’t make sense of how the infrastructure and critical services will be paid for across North Dakota if this measure passes. We don’t believe this is a sustainable action for our state, so the North Dakota Association of Builders wanted to join the **Keep It Local** coalition to help prevent this measure from passing.”*

TOM SPAETH
2024 NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF BUILDERS PRESIDENT
ACCENT CONTRACTING

INTERVIEW



Chad Lawler, MABA
Executive Director

Enhancing a Government Affairs Program in Madison

The Madison Area Builders Association received State and Local Issues Fund (SLIF) support in 2024 to kickstart their advocacy agenda and expand on the abilities of the association. Since the project was funded at the International Builders' Show, MABA have been working closely with AEG Policy Advisors to develop both a strategic plan and a multi-year advocacy agenda. Chad Lawler, EO of the Madison Area Builders Association, hopes that this project will not only create an actionable strategy for his membership, but for HBAs across the association. Chad gave us an update on MABA's progress and his plans for 2025.

Can you talk a bit about the strategic planning process and how your members have been involved during the development?

MABA hired AEG Consulting to assist the association in refocusing its government affairs efforts to move from good but reactive operations to highly organized, proactive, and successful operations. Between March 2024 and May 2024, MABA staff and a Government Affairs Task Force met with AEG on several occasions, including for a half-day strategic planning session on May 21st. The Task Force comprised two builders/developers, an engineer, a realtor/broker, an attorney, the state HBA executive officer, and a supplier member. NAHB Government Relations staff was also on hand to experience the strategic planning session and provide feedback/expertise. The goal was to gain diverse opinions for a holistic view of the opportunities and issues that impact all MABA members related to local government affairs. After receiving the initial draft strategic plan, the Task Force reviewed the strategic plan, providing insights

into the priorities and strategies listed. A final version was drafted by staff that added context and organization based on the Task Force recommendations. The final draft has been shared with the full Government Affairs Committee and a portion of each agenda is dedicated to review of areas of the strategic plan. The strategic plan has provided us with a clear understanding of the next steps needed to take our operations from good to great.

How will the strategic plan affect your 2025 plans for your association? What are your priorities heading into the new year?

We've already seen major changes in our plans for 2025, starting with our staffing and budget. The biggest takeaway from the consultants was the need for more staffing focused on our efforts. As such, we hired a government affairs intern and budgeted in 2025 to continue that role ongoing. We also budgeted for other government affairs initiatives to ensure we could fund the more strategic and proactive activities we are planning, including the hiring of an engineering firm to analyze all municipal fees for land development and residential construction. With the assistance of our new intern and a renewed focus on the strategies for success, we've accomplished more in the past six months than we had in the prior 2-3 years. The added support and focus are key to ensuring we are even more impactful in our work for members.

What advice would you give to other HBAs working to kickstart a government affairs program?

There are a lot of voices in all HBAs, be it staff, committee and association leaders, and members as a whole, and they all have great ideas to move the HBA forward. The two main issues tend to be a lack of capacity/support and a lack of strategic focus on what steps are needed and what activities should be prioritized. If you're not already including government affairs in your HBA strategic plan, please add this pillar to your next plan. Or better yet, consider doing a strategic planning session with a government affairs-focused firm, such as AEG. When you're able to focus on a single area within the HBA and include experts and members who are passionate and knowledgeable about a single topic area, such as government affairs, you're able to refine your efforts more than can be done with your Board of Directors during a general strategic planning session. It is worth the effort and the cost to ensure you're using your resources at its highest efficiency and effectiveness.

FEATURED HBA PHOTOS



Indiana Builders Association CEO Rick Wajda and Governmental Affairs Director Carlie Hopper posed with Congresswoman Erin Houchin (R-Ind.) at the end of last year. Rep. Houchin assumed the office of Secretary of the House Republican Conference in 2025.



BUILD-PAC Trustee Heath VanNatter with Rep. Jim Baird (R-Ind.) at the end of 2024.



2025 Florida HBA President Ryan Benson participated in a panel discussion at the National Association of Counties 2024 Annual Conference about advancing housing affordability through innovation.



Members convene at the annual Pacific Coast Builders Conference (PCBC) in Anaheim, Calif. in June of 2024 to discuss residential construction.



NAHB Chairman Carl Harris (pictured right) meets with California BIA members during PCBC to discuss housing priorities and offer NAHB support.