

HB24-1313 Will Dramatically Increase Evacuation Times & Loss of Lives

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Sun, Mar 24, 2024 at 10:18 PM

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Dear Honorable House Finance Committee,

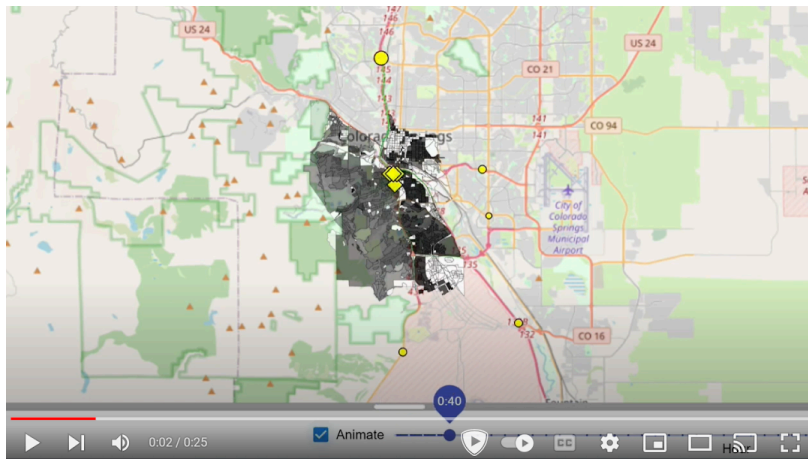
We want to acknowledge that there are many other excellent reasons to oppose HB24-1313, but we want to focus on the wildfire evacuation concerns this raises as we know many will be sharing other valid reasons to oppose.

Once again, we implore you to consider the impact of high density housing, both in terms of density of structures and density of people living in the structures, on fire spread and evacuation times. We testified against HB24-1007 because increasing the density of persons living in homes will dramatically increase cars on the roads. HB24-1313 takes that estimated 33% increase in population in existing structures and **increases the density by up to 10X or 900%**. We already have **scientific analysis, accurate +/-15% from FEMA studies**, that show **our times are life-threatening, TODAY. What will the new times be when all this density is added?** It's grossly irresponsible to approve either of these bills without being able to answer that question. Below is a chart that shows estimated evacuation time impacts of the combination of HB24-1007 and HB24-1313:

	Blue-sky Evacuation Times**		
	Today	HB24-1007*	HB24-1007 + HB24-1313
Broadmoor/Cheyenne	8 hours 30 min	11 hours	?
Mountain Shadows/Peregrine	8 hours 20 min	11 hours	?
Pine Creek/Flying Horse	6 hours	8 hours	?

*Williamsburg, VA & Boulder, CO increases of 33%, but it will likely be even higher.
 **Blue-sky evacuation times means no tires popping/engines stalling leaving cars blocking road/trees down/etc.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with **the SCIENCE of evacuation modeling**. This simulation of an evacuation done by [evacuation experts with over 3,000 academic citations](#) shows you the Broadmoor/Cheyenne area in Colorado Springs, without the maximum populations and assumes blue-sky conditions. We have **THIRTY-SIX choke points with times of 12-16 minutes for a SINGLE CAR to clear an intersection. Every single car added to that already life-threatening evacuation only worsens outcomes.** Our road networks have not been expanded our updated in two decades as we have continued to densify with an estimate 10,000 and 20,000 DAILY cars being added to one of our 3 two-lane egress that, by the way, includes the zoo and all the animals and visitors being trapped for a "mini-downtown" atop a 14 million ton cyanide gold mill, 12 stories deep with a decant pond 120 feet deep.



In the above simulation, gray turns to white as the people clear the area. Yellow diamonds are the choke-points and the yellow circles are the safe-clearance end points.

We can do those models and must, but we are very confident given the reporting of both Colorado Public Radio and JDSupra, excerpts below, that the increase is 40 homes/acre, or a **NINE HUNDRED PERCENT INCREASE** in spite of the language of the bill claiming 15 homes/acre which is still outrageous and far more than our road network infrastructure can successfully handle.

"Each city would have to allow an average of 40 units per acre across all of its transit-adjacent areas, with exemptions for certain properties. That's typically enough density to allow a three-to-five-story midrise apartment. But not every property near a transit line would automatically get rezoned for apartment complexes. Cities would focus development in "transit centers." The local governments could choose to allow higher densities of up to 300

units per acre in a transit center - in the range of eight to ten floors. By concentrating development near transit at much lower densities — while still hitting its overall required amount of transit-oriented housing."

Colorado Public Radio - "New bill could force Colorado cities to allow density near transit lines"

"Housing Opportunity Goals Among other provisions, the bill would require TOCs to create, meet and report on a "housing opportunity goal," which is a zoning capacity goal calculated by multiplying the total amount of transit areas within the jurisdiction (minus exempt parcels) by an average zoned housing density of 40 units per acre. Residential density of this nature would be a dramatic change for local governments that do not have similar densities reflected in their land development codes or existing zone districts. For example, this increase would double the density of the densest residential district in the City of Greenwood Village, from a maximum allowed 20 units per acre to the required 40 units per acre under this bill."

JDSupra - "Transit-Oriented Communities Bill Targets Housing Access through State Intervention"

In Colorado Springs alone, there are well-over 133,000 people living in the largest WUI in the state. Everything in the high country will face the same problems as do all of the communities along the front range which easily account for over a million people that will immediately be trapped when that next fire hits. We have learned from history that housing density is one of the primary drivers of conflagration into urban neighborhoods in dire fires. Below are just a few where housing density was cited:

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| <p>1. 2003 Cedar Fire, San Diego County, California: The Cedar Fire remains one of the largest wildfires in California's history. It destroyed numerous communities in San Diego County. The high density of homes in certain areas, especially those bordering wildland interfaces, contributed to the fire's spread. The fire highlighted the risks of suburban and exurban development patterns in fire-prone landscapes.</p> | <p>2. 2011 Slave Lake Wildfire, Alberta, Canada: This wildfire destroyed roughly one-third of the town of Slave Lake, demonstrating how high winds can drive a wildfire into densely populated areas, leading to significant property loss. The rapid urban spread of the fire underscored the challenges of protecting densely populated areas adjacent to wildland.</p> | <p>3. 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire: Thankfully, many people had evacuated on days one and two of this fire; so, when the conflagration into the Mountain Shadows community occurred, it was not an evacuation at maximum capacity. If it were, many more people would have perished. We got lucky. The after-action report identified dense housing as being the conflagration point pushing it into the residential neighborhoods where 347 homes were lost.</p> | <p>4. 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire, Alberta, Canada: While the initial cause of the wildfire was not directly related to housing density, the rapid spread of the fire through the Fort McMurray area was exacerbated by the close proximity of homes, particularly in neighborhoods that bordered forested areas. The fire led to the largest wildfire evacuation in Alberta's history.</p> | <p>5. 2017 Tubbs Fire, Santa Rosa, California: Part of the complex of fires in Northern California's wine country in October 2017, the Tubbs Fire destroyed neighborhoods in Santa Rosa. The fire's rapid spread into densely populated neighborhoods was facilitated by strong winds and the proximity of homes to one another, as well as to the surrounding wildlands.</p> | <p>6. 2018 Camp Fire, Paradise, California: The Camp Fire was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history, destroying the town of Paradise. While the fire was sparked by electrical transmission lines, the rapid spread through residential areas was intensified by the town's layout and housing density. Narrow roads and limited evacuation routes also contributed to the tragedy, with many residents unable to escape the fast-moving flames.</p> | <p>7. 2021 Marshal Fire, Boulder, CO: How quickly we forget and ignore. The Marshal fire was the most destructive wildfire in Colorado's history in terms of property loss. The fire burned through the towns of Superior and Louisville, destroying over 1,000 structures, most of which were homes. The FEMA MAT analysis of the Marshal fire repeatedly cited housing density as a significant factor in the conflagration moving the fire from a grass fire to catastrophic destruction of entire neighborhoods.</p> | <p>These dire fires move at 100 football fields/minute. No one can outrun them; so, it's on our leadership to ensure we can escape in our cars. Approving HB24-1007 and HB24-1107 is a death sentence for potentially any WUI resident of Colorado. It is the primary job of the government to protect the public safety of the people who voted you into office.</p> |
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We thank you, in advance, for fulfilling your duty to those you serve by **voting no to both HB24-1007 and HB24-1313.**

Westside Watch Board of Directors

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House Finance

03/25/2024 01:30 PM

HB24-1313 Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Karen Kalavity None themselves	<p>Providing opportunities for public transit to cut down on car use is important.</p> <p>But assuming that placing high density housing near public transit will result in cleaner air, or more affordable housing is a false ideal.</p> <p>Many developers are simply using "transit-oriented design" as an excuse to crowd units together without realizing that they must create an environment for people to live within, rather than an environment that is only useful by escaping through public transit. That is, it would be much wiser to design pedestrian-oriented communities with parks, stores & recreation nearby, rather than transit-oriented communities where people have to take transportation in order to enjoy or participate in their surroundings somewhere else.</p>
Trudy A Haines Against Fort Collins (HOA) Home Owners Association Coalition	<p>Dear Finance Committee,</p> <p>We urge a "No" vote on HB24-1313. This over-reaching mandate from the state usurps local home rule land use and zoning authority. Local land use officials are in a much better position to understand the unique complexities of the widely varying conditions in Colorado cities, towns and counties.</p> <p>As much as 70% of these local jurisdictions could fall under the bill's .5 mile radii of transit corridors and stations. These areas will face a mandate of 40 housing units per acres. That represents a 2x to 10x increase in density, for high to low density residential zoning, respectively.</p> <p>Among many concerns is the bill's punitive withholding of state transportation funding from non-compliant jurisdictions. This vital funding is used for road maintenance, safety, and stormwater drainage. This is too heavy handed.</p>

	<p>Finally, there are no requirements that the additional housing units be affordable! Local jurisdictions will merely end up with 2x to 10x more unaffordable, high-priced housing. Developers are building luxury apartments! As such, HB-1313 is a dream bill for developers and national real estate investment speculators.</p> <p>Thank you for your service, please help. Trudy Haines</p>
<p>Charles Kopp Against themselves</p>	<p>To House Finance Committee:</p> <p>Please vote a resounding NO on HB24 1313, which is one of the worst in the misguided draconian efforts by the state to mandate in an unprecedented way in what should remain local housing issues. Increasing housing density in transit corridors is a good idea for environmental and other reasons, but not to the extent in this bad bill that would involve a lot more than narrow corridors and result in a lot of packed housing that would ruin the character and quality of life in many neighborhoods. Local officials are best qualified to make decisions on how a lot of additional housing impacts their communities, and I believe communities should maintain the right to grow or not grow according to how the majority of their residents feel about the issue.</p> <p>We definitely need more affordable housing in Colorado, as in so many other places throughout the nation. But 1313 and related bills, relying on a "build, baby, build!" market approach, don't even directly require what's actually more affordable and would probably result in mainly a lot more high-priced housing being built. Communities can come up with their own plans for the kind of housing that's really needed, and the state should stick to its legitimate role of offering guidance, but not mandates on housing matters. And if the latter happens, there may be a lot of lawsuits from resentful communities.</p> <p>Please, let's not hand the no doubt influential developers and investors a golden opportunity to rake in tons of profits, while threatening punitive action for non-compliant communities with things like withdrawal of essential transportation funding. The great numbers of Coloradoans who care about preserving the character of</p>

	<p>our communities, our quality of life, and great natural environment will be watching how you all vote on 1313 and related bills. There have to be better ways of providing more affordable housing and other issues involved.</p> <p>Thank you for your service to our great state, and please kill this bill!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Charles Kopp Fort Collins charleskopp01@gmail.com</p>
<p>David Roy Against themselves</p>	<p>When it comes to housing, something invisible has risen to a level where we're being told by you that 'affordability' is an urgent problem that needs your support, and our homes, and our neighborhoods; yet is simply the same old story of greed and corruption.</p> <p>"Undervalued". In capital markets, that phrase is a signal to buy. In Colorado, the concept has caused you, our elected officials, from Governor Polis down, to sell, and yell 'raze', to investment giants, evidenced by a slew of horrific housing bills, including HB24-1313, that the State of Colorado is trying to cram into our neighborhoods.</p> <p>It is as though your constituents had bought stock in Apple on day 1, and that in the last few years, too many people thought that Apple stock was too expensive to purchase, so you contrived a plan that takes away this investment from people who put their money in it early, and gifting it to an industry that wants day one prices for tomorrow's profits.</p> <p>These are our homes, our communities. We invested in them with our money and time, we've grown families in them, and weathered storms that are personal, economic, and literal. And now, you are</p>

	<p>selling us out, willing to destroy our neighborhoods, exchanging our quality of life that we've made real, into an investment vehicle for today's version of robber barons.</p> <p>We elect public servants like you to make solutions to problems that are fair. HB24-1313 is not fair.</p> <p>Please don't support HB24-1313.</p> <p>David Roy 2016 Evergreen Court Fort Collins CO 80521 (979) 493-9201</p>
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