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September 11, 2014

Councilmember O'Brien  
Seattle City Council  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

**RE: Comments on draft Council Bill 118201: Micro-Housing and Congregate Residences**

Dear Councilmember O'Brien:

On behalf of Public Health – Seattle & King County (Public Health), we thank you for the opportunity to comment on draft C.B. 118201 regarding micro-housing and congregate residences. We appreciate that the Council is exploring the health and safety of micro-housing and congregate residences. Public Health serves more than 1.9 million residents and visitors of King County and works to identify and promote conditions under which all people live within healthy communities and achieve optimum health.

Public Health supports inclusion of the following aspects in the final council bill:

**Number of sinks:**

- Components of a small efficiency dwelling unit should include a minimum of two sinks; one in the bathroom and one in the kitchen because:
  - Hand-washing is a preferred method to reduce the transmission of disease. The more sinks available, the more hand-washing takes place by making the healthy choice the easy choice; and
  - Contamination of hand and food contact surfaces is common. The ability to minimize the contamination of surfaces and contamination across surfaces (i.e. bathroom to kitchen and vice versa) is important to reducing the transmission of disease.

**Occupancy:**

- Health impacts from overcrowding can include physical health (disease), mental health and personal safety (accidents).
- Current Seattle Building and Maintenance code defines occupancy using a combination of minimum floor square footage and number of persons (SHBMC 22.206.020). As proposed, the current bill provides only a square footage minimum as represented by an average. We are encouraging the incorporation of language that also defines the number of persons allowed in each micro-housing unit in compliance with current city code.

**Built Environment:**

- Policy language prioritizing locations for this housing in urban centers as a way to provide convenience and easy access to frequent transit service is critical. This is even more crucial in areas where those needing affordable housing may not have access to an automobile and will rely on transit service to commute to work, school and other activities.
- We support of the goal to increase required bicycle storage, especially storage which will be easily accessible to residents and is located in a secure location. Bicycling (and walking) not only provides a physical activity opportunity, but will be a valuable form of transportation for many residents. We want to emphasize that adequate, easily accessible and secure bicycle storage not only will encourage residents to use this form of transportation, but ensures them that their property will be kept in a safe manner.
- The use of green landscaping requirements to provide residents with access to green space/open space is especially important in dense urban centers. We would like to emphasize design options that will improve safety of community spaces, such as having building entrances and windows look out on to public open spaces, streets and parking areas; pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets that surround the site; front porches; and adequate nighttime lighting.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Ngozi Oleru, Environmental Public Health Services Division Director, at [Ngozi.Oleru@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Ngozi.Oleru@kingcounty.gov) or 206-263-8476, or Nicole Thomsen, Public Environmental Health Planner, at [Nicole.Thomsen@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Nicole.Thomsen@kingcounty.gov) or 206-263-8516.

Thank you for taking up this important issue that will contribute to the health of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patty Hayes  
Interim Director  
Public Health – Seattle & King County