



American Planning Association  
Florida Chapter

*Making Great Communities Happen*

May 20, 2021

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Office of the Governor  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Veto Request of HB 487

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Florida) respectfully requests that you veto HB 487. We believe that this bill will preempt and erode the authority of local governments to effectively plan for their communities.

APA Florida is the state's largest professional planning organization. With almost 3,000 members working as planners for private developers and landowners, local governments, state and regional agencies, and interest groups, we support an integrated and coordinated planning system in Florida, including meaningful citizen participation, which understands and plans for the regional and extra-jurisdictional impacts of development.

Currently, a comprehensive plan amendment may be considered to be small scale if it involves 10 acres or less, and only proposes a map change for a site-specific small scale development activity. In rural areas of opportunity, the threshold rises to 20 acres. As a small-scale amendment, this category is only required to have one public hearing with no review by state or regional agencies.

HB 487 would dramatically increase the size threshold for small scale amendments from 10 acres to 50 acres. In rural areas of opportunity, the threshold would rise to 100 acres. A development of 50 or 100 acres is often large-scale development, with the potential to have multi-jurisdictional impacts. The requirement for only one public hearing also limits the community's ability to participate in the planning process. In rural areas in particular, development of this magnitude can significantly impact land use patterns and infrastructure needs, as well as potentially increase premature urban conversion of rural lands. Developments of this size do not fit in the category of a "site-specific small scale development activity."

In addition to increasing the size threshold, HB 487 does not limit the number of small-scale amendments that can be submitted each year to a local government, nor does it limit the number of such amendments that can be submitted by a single entity. This may have the unintended consequence of encouraging the piecemealing of property into multiple small scale map amendments, which undergo a limited level of review and public scrutiny, for what otherwise should be reviewed as a single overall development proposal requiring more in-depth review and greater public input opportunities.

We respectfully request that you veto HB 487.

Sincerely,

Wiatt F. Bowers, AICP, President

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