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Dear Shoreline Rule Making,

I am concerned about the additional costs and regulatory uncertainty that the Department of Ecology's proposed Shoreline Master Program guidelines could create for housing development across Washington.

Cities and counties would be required to update regulations, conduct additional studies, and take on new administrative responsibilities. These requirements come at a cost, and those costs are ultimately passed along through higher permitting fees, increased development expenses, and higher housing costs. At a time when Washington is already struggling to produce enough housing to meet demand, we should be working to reduce unnecessary barriers to development, not create new ones.

I am also concerned about the potential for overlapping regulatory authority and uncertainty in the permitting process. Local governments are responsible for administering shoreline regulations and making permitting decisions, while Ecology's expanded involvement could introduce additional layers of review without corresponding accountability. For housing developers and providers, regulatory predictability is essential. Unclear requirements, additional delays, and uncertainty over decision-making authority can make otherwise viable housing projects financially infeasible.

Washington can and should prepare for the impacts of climate change while continuing to address our housing affordability crisis. These objectives are not mutually exclusive.

I urge the Department of Ecology to revise its proposed guidelines to provide greater regulatory clarity, preserve appropriate local decision-making authority, and avoid imposing unnecessary costs and obstacles to housing development.