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March 28, 2013

To: Rep. Brian Clem, Chair
Rep. Kevin Cameron, Vice Chair
Rep. Lew Frederick, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Land Use

From: Erin Doyle, Intergovernmental Relations Associate

Re: HB 3384 – Land Use decisions for veteran services

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding our concerns presented by HB 3384. We are opposed to this legislation because it moves land use decision making authority out of local governments and to the state for a specific land use.

As you know, land use decisions are intrinsically local decisions, a fact recognized in the legislative findings adopting our current land use system. Cities work with their citizens to formulate appropriate land use plans that reflect the direction and character of a city as it grows and adapts. Cities have many factors that they include in the land use decisions including cost of service improvements, traffic impacts, need for development of housing, industry, commercial, or other land uses. In addition, the city works on a plan in a public forum that is open to a public process in which local residents may make their desires and concerns known to elected officials.

In addition, cities employ knowledgeable staff who provides reports to the boards and councils making land use decisions that project costs of services and the necessary facilities and infrastructure changes required by decisions to expand the urban growth boundary or rezone an area for a new type of use. Staff makes recommendations and explains the multitude of factors that are part of the consideration to add an area into the urban growth boundary or develop it for particular uses. The city council makes the decision taking not just staff's recommendations but also public opinion into account. In this way, the land use decisions reflect not just the capability of a city to properly serve and area but also what the community wants for itself.

If HB 3384 were to pass, none of the issues regarding local character, local service capabilities, or local desires would be taken into account when decisions related to one type of facility. Cities respect and honor our veterans and ensure that they receive

services, but HB 3384 is not the right way to do that. It would instead allow one type of service provider to be exempted from the current land use process and opens the door to special exceptions for all types of service providers that do good work within our communities. Cities are not opposed to siting veterans support facilities within our city or urban growth boundaries. Instead we want to maintain local control of the process for approving a land use to avoid placement that is inconsistent with the growth and development of the rest of a city.

In order to successfully complete long-term growth and public facilities planning, local government must be in control of the land use permitting process. Given that cities often manage the infrastructural development of the area they are better situated to determine if an area can be developed appropriately. The state has many areas of expertise, but local land use planning is not part of its job nor should it be.

For these reason, the League of Cities respectfully requests that this committee does not pass HB 3384.