



# Illinois State Association of Counties

March 11, 2026

The Honorable JB Pritzker  
Governor  
207 Statehouse  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker:

The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) is writing regarding provisions contained in House Bill 5626 and Senate Bill 4061 that would amend the Illinois Counties Code to establish a statewide building standard allowing residential buildings of up to six stories to be constructed with a single stairway. Under the proposals, these structures would be permitted provided they include fire sprinkler systems, smoke detection in all dwelling units and common areas, self-closing unit doors, emergency escape openings for each dwelling unit, and limits on the number of units per floor.

While ISACo recognizes the importance of addressing housing supply and affordability challenges across Illinois, counties are concerned about the provisions in these bills that preempt local governments from enforcing building or zoning codes that prohibit this type of design. Counties have long exercised authority over building and safety standards in unincorporated areas to ensure development aligns with community needs, public safety considerations, and local infrastructure capacity. Removing this discretion would limit counties' ability to apply locally appropriate standards.

In addition, the proposed statewide requirement does not align with the provisions of the 2021 International Building Code (IBC), which continues to require two stairways for residential buildings of this height. Departing from these standards through state preemption raises concerns about the implications for building safety and the ability of counties to maintain code frameworks that reflect nationally accepted practices.

For these reasons, ISACo respectfully requests that we be included in ongoing discussions regarding these provisions and any related amendments affecting county authority under the Illinois Counties Code. We can offer county practitioners who would add expertise and value to the discussions.

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ISACo looks forward to working with your administration and members of the General Assembly to address housing needs while preserving the important role counties play in protecting public safety and managing development within their jurisdictions.

Please feel welcome to contact me at (c: 217-836-9164; w: 217-679-3368) or via email (jmccoy@isacoil.org) directly if there are opportunities for counties to participate constructively in these discussions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe McCoy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Joe McCoy  
Executive Director

c: Senate President Don Harmon  
Senate Republican Leader John Curran  
Speaker of the House Emanuel "Chris" Welch  
House Republican Leader Tony McCombie