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AGENDA MATERIAL

DATE 5/20/25

ITEM NO. RA 2.1

Public Comment from Pima Council on Aging (PCOA)

May 16, 2025

To: Pima County Board of Supervisors

Re: Public Comment on Policy D 22.17 – Three Cents for Affordable Housing

As the designated Area Agency on Aging serving Pima County, Pima Council on Aging has advocated for and served the needs of older adults and their loved ones since 1967. Through regular community-led needs assessments and the day-to-day delivery of services and programs, we maintain a deep understanding of the evolving needs of the older adult community. With this earned perspective, PCOA strongly supports the adoption of Policy D 22.17 to establish a dedicated funding stream for affordable housing in Pima County. We believe this initiative is a critical step toward addressing the rising housing instability facing older adults.

In the past five years, PCOA has seen a sharp increase in older adults unable to find or keep housing they can afford. Many of the people we serve pay 85% or more of their monthly income toward housing, an amount well above sustainable thresholds. When rent and utility costs outpace Social Security and other fixed income adjustments, even modest increases can push older adults toward homelessness, medical neglect, or institutionalization.

According to the MAP AZ Dashboard, over 31,000 older adult households in the Tucson MSA earn at or below 50% of the Area Median Income, yet only about 4,585 subsidized units across all housing support programs are occupied by older adults. County materials also note that adults aged 60 and older have been the fastest-growing age group in Pima County since 2000, underscoring the urgency of addressing housing for this demographic.

While Policy D 22.17 does not specifically earmark funds for older adults, a significant investment in affordable housing overall will ease pressure across the system, including for older residents, who often face accessibility needs and longer wait times.

Stable, affordable housing is essential to aging well. It prevents premature nursing home placement, supports community health, and allows people to remain engaged and independent. We urge the Board to move forward with this initiative as a sound investment in Pima County's aging population.

In community,

Pima Council on Aging

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