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Smart Zoning: The Bill That Builds Arizona's Economic Future

Frank Carroll – Opinion Contributor

Arizona has long prided itself on fostering a business-friendly, free-market environment that attracts innovation, investment, and high paying jobs. As our state continues to grow, we must take forward-thinking steps to ensure we remain competitive, attracting companies from around the globe, and ensuring the businesses built here, have a place to call home forever. A bill of mine that I amended in a House Committee last week, is currently advancing back to the Senate, and it does just that – it removes unnecessary red tape and empowers municipalities to support economic growth, housing solutions, and workforce expansion through a smart zoning reform.

SB 1543 is not just about helping one headquarter campus thrive – though it certainly will. It's about setting a precedent that will help attract future investment, spark job creation, and provide real solutions to the critical housing shortage. The bill allows municipalities with populations between 200,000 and 500,000 to permit hotel and multifamily residential uses, without requiring a public hearing, within areas already zoned for light industrial use if the development is part of an international headquarters campus.

Why is this important? Because thriving businesses need more than office space – they need housing nearby for workers, accommodations for visitors, and walkable communities that support local shops and restaurants. Mixed-use developments are essential to building sustainable, free-market economies. By removing bureaucratic obstacles to allow for ancillary hotel and housing use in designated zones, the bill gives Arizona communities the flexibility to meet the demands of modern tech expansion and the workforce of tomorrow.

I'm sponsoring SB 1543 to represent the kind of policy Arizona needs for pro-business, pro-housing, and pro-growth. It lays the groundwork for future companies to choose Arizona, strengthen our workforce with high-paying jobs, and help small businesses grow by creating communities where people live, work, and spend.

Let's make Arizona a home of endless economic development. Support this bill for the future of our economy, our workforce, and communities.

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