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Don't buy home in HOA if you can't heed rules: Homeowners associations are about following rules -- and if you disagree with the rule, it's best to buy a house elsewhere. These associations exist to preserve property values, enforce community aesthetics and maintain common areas in a neighborhood. The rules can be restrictive. Sometimes association officers can use their authority too enthusiastically and cause real problems for folks. But love them or hate them, you know going into a real-estate deal that the home is in a homeowners association, or HOA, and that by buying the home, you are agreeing to follow certain rules. Buying the house and then complaining about the restrictions is disingenuous and doesn't lead to good public policy. That's what is happening in Oro Valley's Rancho Vistoso development. Randy Malick bought a house seven years ago knowing that the HOA rules did not allow amateur radio towers. He is a ham-radio operator, and ham radios require tall, outdoor antennas in order to broadcast. Thus Malick is pushing for legislation that would force homeowners associations to allow the towers and specifies "reasonable heights and dimensions" for the structures. The bill, HB 2514, made it out of the House Committee on Military Affairs and Public Safety on a 5-3 vote and is headed the full House. Malick told the committee that ham radios are a public-safety necessity in times of disaster because ham operators can communicate when other forms of communication, such as land lines and cell phones, go out. It's a fair point, but if that's an overriding concern, it would have made more sense not to purchase a home in an HOA that prohibits ham-radio towers.

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